

BRITAIN'S HIGHEST PAID MAN

The City asks: 'Is this ex-tennis pro worth £66m a year?'

BUSINESS, PAGE 20

STARTS TODAY: SEX AT WORK

Judi James asks should you or shouldn't you?

FEATURES, PAGE 15

BILL GATES SIGNS UP BARNEY

Why a dinosaur is set to conquer the world

MEDIA +

OUR MAN ON EVEREST

Stephen Goodwin begins the long trek to base camp

NEWS, PAGE 9

THE INDEPENDENT

Monday 30 March 1998 45p (IR 50p) No 3,571

Blair to hire 20,000 for millennium bug army

Exclusive

By Anthony Bevis
Political Editor

A 20,000-STRONG army of "Bug Busters" is to be trained to tackle the threat posed by the millennium computer date-change crisis, Tony Blair will announce today.

In an article for the Independent, he says the "technical timebomb" poses a "serious threat to our economic performance" and the possibility of "major disruption to essential services such as benefit payments or even emergency services such as hospitals, the fire service and the police".

The Government will offer grants to train young people, the older unemployed or retired people to help companies deal with the bug. Mr Blair says it will help them launch careers in information technology.

The Prime Minister, who has tabled the millennium bug as an item for discussion by the coming meeting of the G8 countries in Birmingham, is to attend a conference on the problem in London this morning. Com-

puters are threatened by the bug because millions of programs have been created on the basis of a two-digit year, like 98. When they turn to zero, zero at the end of next year, many will be unable to distinguish between the year 2000 and 1990. The full consequences of that confusion, and the chain-link reaction of computer crashes cannot be known until the millennium itself.

Mr Blair says in today's Independent that although the Government is leading the way in raising awareness, only 37 out of 128 countries borrowing from the World Bank said they were aware of the problem and only six had set up awareness-raising campaign organisations like Britain's Action 2000.

But, while awareness of the problem was complete in the UK, a quarter of companies had not started taking action.

"So there has been progress, but not enough," Mr Blair says. £70m set aside in this month's budget will be used to help small and medium companies to develop information-technology skills to assess and fix systems which would be hit by the millennium bug.

"We will offer a £1,300 time-limited grant for people to train in how to look for and solve the year 2000 problem," he says.

"If we get the response from business we are looking for, there will be an army of 20,000 'bug busters' fully trained between now and next April."

Mr Blair, who estimates the cost of dealing with the problem across the public sector stands at £3bn, also announces that he is increasing the budget for Action 2000 from £1m to £17m and putting £10m into a new World Bank Trust Fund to provide experts on training in developing countries in the hope that other European and developed countries will follow the lead.

Mr Blair says in today's Independent that John Prescott, deputy Prime Minister, and Sir Jeremy Betcham, chairman of the Local Government Association, are writing to every local authority leader and chief executive "asking them to set up their own task forces to raise awareness in their local areas and to co-ordinate action between the private and public sector locally".

Tony Blair writes, page 17



Paul Weller and the singers the Medieval Babels walk in London to mark the 30th anniversary of the homeless charity Crisis Photograph: Kalpesh Lathiga

Police probe Hall's £200m deal

Exclusive

By Ian Baird
and Tim Lacey

A PROPOSED £200m property development involving a company controlled by Douglas Hall, the former Newcastle United vice-chairman, is being probed by police involved in one of the largest ever investigations into alleged local government corruption.

Frank Squad detectives have spoken to former and serving councillors in Doncaster in connection with an ambitious plan to build a championship golf course, leisure, hotel and busi-

ness complex and 1,100 homes on prime agricultural and green belt land.

The Independent has learned that the Rossington Hall project is one of at least six developments being examined by detectives investigating the so-called Donnygate scandal, which has led to the suspension of the district Labour party.

An 18-strong police team expect to spend two years on their inquiry - Operation Damun - the Roman name for Doncaster.

The Rossington Hall development stemmed from Newcastle tycoon Sir John Hall's dream of turning a part of the Yorkshire countryside into a

version of Wynyard Hall - his family's estate in Cleveland. His son Douglas is chairman of Rossington Hall Investments, the company behind the project.

Douglas Hall last week resigned as vice-chairman of Newcastle United football club after mocking the club's supporters and the women of Newcastle in comments made to an undercover newspaper reporter.

The Rossington Hall project, which was backed by the Professional Golfers Association European Tour, was expected to create 14,000 jobs and was supported by Doncaster councillors.

But the scheme ran into opposition from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

and the council's own planners.

Douglas Hall's company, Cameron Hall Developments, which has a majority shareholding in the company behind the Rossington Hall project said it had no comment on the police inquiry except to say that it was a "well-established and highly-respected development company".

The investigation into Doncaster began last April after serious concerns about the financial management of the local authority were highlighted by the District Auditor. In 1993 council officials revealed that they were being bullied by councillors over planning matters.

Detectives are investigating

expenses irregularities, questionable awards of contracts and controversial planning matters. One councillor, two contractors and one council official have been arrested in connection with the inquiry. Five senior councillors have been suspended by the Labour party.

Last night Detective Chief Supt Mick Burdiss, of South Yorkshire CID, who is heading the inquiry, said: "The rules of local government are well set down and very strict. In Doncaster there is a lot of evidence that these rules have not been applied and they have been abused by councillors and senior officials. That is very serious."

Sir John's dream, page 4

Clip Murdoch's wings, senior MPs tell Blair

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

PRESSURE is growing on Tony Blair from senior Labour MPs to back new laws on press freedom to limit the power of Rupert Murdoch over the British media.

Clipping Mr Murdoch's wings would be one way of answering the claims that Mr Blair is "coying up" to Mr Murdoch. There are quite a few MPs who are deeply concerned about Murdoch and want to stop him. There is a considerable feeling

that we want to do something about Murdoch," said Clive Soley, chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Action to preserve a diverse press to challenge Mr Murdoch's influence could also be used to head off the threat of a Labour backbench revolt on the Competition Bill, over a clause to outlaw predatory pricing by the Times.

The Government has delayed the second reading of the Competition Bill until after Easter, but the controversy over Mr Murdoch's access to Mr

Blair continued to embarrass the Government after a weekend disclosure that a Labour official in charge of high value fundraising, Amanda Delew, had written a memorandum last May saying big business donors would want access to Mr Blair and Jonathan Powell, the No 10 Chief of Staff.

Senior Labour sources last night said that the reports of a revolt on the Competition Bill by 50 Labour MPs were "over the top - it will be a handball". But there is a growing call among party backbench leaders

for action. The MPs were alarmed at the apparent editorial interference by Mr Murdoch over the decision by HarperCollins, another Murdoch publishing house, to cancel the book by Chris Patten, the former Governor of Hong Kong, allegedly because it clashed with Mr Murdoch's business plans in China.

Tam Dalyell has already warned the whips he cannot support the Government, when it asks MPs to overturn a defeat in the Lords on an amendment to the Competition Bill to

outlaw predatory pricing. Mr Murdoch's senior executives have been mounting a counter-offensive at the Commons to reassure Labour MPs.

Peter Stothard, the editor of the Times, had a meeting last week with David Winnick and Robin Corbett, after they had criticised Mr Murdoch's influence in the Commons.

The Chief Executive of News International, which owns the Times, has called for a meeting this week with Mr Soley. But in spite of the assurances from Mr Murdoch's men, Labour MPs

are keen to see some action. Mr Soley said he did not believe the amendment by Lord McNally, the Liberal Democrat peer, outlawing predatory pricing, would work, and Mr Murdoch would circumvent existing laws. "I would like to see media legislation," he said. "Clause one would be on a free press and everything else would be set out - privacy, harassment, and media ownership. This is not just a can of beans we are talking about."

Fund-raiser at centre of row, page 8

Sport section



THE return of Paul Gascoigne (above) to English club football was far from cheerful. He was booked for his new club as Middlesbrough lost the Coca-Cola Cup final 2-0 to Chelsea. In Brazil Mika Hakkinen and David Coulthard ran up a second grand prix one-two for McLaren. In Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Silk Cut finished first in the sixth leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race.

Naked in a cage for 5 years for knife attack

By Marcus Tanner

HIS CRIME was to attack a policeman with a knife 10 years ago in China's southern province of Guangdong. His punishment has been to be kept naked in a cage for five years, hobbled by shackles round his legs. The case was never brought to trial because he was deemed mentally ill.

The Chinese reporters who discovered Deng Qilu said he quickly gobbled the food they passed through the bars, muttering that he hadn't been fed for two days, or perhaps three. Even in country with as erratic a human rights record as

China's, the revelation that the authorities in the countryside still rely on the same kind of savage methods towards the mentally unbalanced that were used by their ancestors in feudal times has come as a shock.

The newspaper that broke the story, the Yangcheng Evening News, published two photographs of Deng and daringly remarked that "some" local police regarded his detention as inhumane. "There is no sign the authorities are going to handle this case appropriately," it noted. "How much longer will Deng Qilu 'live' in a cage?"

The answer is... no one really knows. For Deng Qilu's nightmarish sojourn is not the

result of some bureaucratic bungle. The tiny prison, constructed of steel bars and concrete pipes, was first set up beside a sewage ditch outside a village police station. Later, the newspaper said, the police had it towed to a courtyard belonging to Deng's family, where it now stands underneath a banana tree.

Asked by reporters why he was in a cage, the man answered: "They don't allow me to talk." A police spokesman contacted by the newspaper said: "Maybe they locked him away to stop him hitting people."

China's authorities have made much of recent alleged improvements to their judicial



The newspaper front page story of Deng Qilu

system, and of a growing commitment to the rule of law. And in one sense, the mere fact the case of Deng Qilu was published at all is a good sign, another indication that the country's once slavish press is beginning to investigate and expose social ills.

Today's news

Israel to stay in Lebanon

"Despite all the honeyed words... Israel is not going to withdraw a single soldier from its occupation zone 60 miles south of Beirut." Robert Fisk, Page 11

Potter biography

DENNIS POTTER, who enjoyed stirring up controversy with his television dramas, continues to cause ructions among the literati after his death with allegations about his sexually predatory behaviour. Page 3



9 770951 945511

"This Hen is going down well too."

A perfect combination of smoothness and strength, with a subtle blend of flavours. Available in all fine supermarkets and off-licences.

A most Gratifying Ale.

Brewed by Morland of Abingdon. Est'd. 1711.

Potter was no sex pest, says object of desire

By Kim Sengupta

DENNIS POTTER, who enjoyed stirring up controversy with his television dramas, continues to cause ructions among the literary after his death with allegations about his sexually predatory behaviour towards women writers.

The novelist Caroline Seebohm is reported to have claimed that the playwright wanted to establish a "three-way" with him and his wife, and she was forced to go to America to get away from his "terrifying pestering".

But Margaret Forster, another writer who became the object of Mr Potter's attentions, believes he was basically a fantasist and his behaviour may have been misunderstood.

The sexuality of the author of *The Singing Detective* and *Penetration* is expected to be examined in detail in an official biography by Humphrey Carpenter due out in September. It will reveal that Mr Potter was strongly attracted to Gina Bellman, whom he cast in *Blackeyes*, and also include claims about his relationship with his agent Judy Daish, although Ms Daish denies there was ever an affair.

Ms Seebohm, who wrote *The Last Romantic*, a 1987 novel about Oxford undergraduates, is reported in a Sunday newspaper as saying she was relentlessly pursued by Mr Potter in the mid 1960s. The playwright, who had married his childhood sweetheart Margaret, became so demanding that she fled to the US to be followed by a stream of passionate letters.

Mr Potter began to suffer from a crippling arthritic dis-

ease, and said Ms Seebohm was curing him in "some kind of religious way". She, however, felt it was "emotional blackmail", she was being "psychologically damaged" and needed to get away, the report claims.

Margaret Forster, the author of the novel *Georgy Girl* and the biographer of Daphne Du Maurier, also received a long letter from Potter in 1977 in which he talked about how he had been besotted with her since appearing together in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* in Oxford in the 1960s. The letter had the drawing of a heart next to her name. He wrote "The pest is not just a foreign country, it's an enchanted land".

But Ms Forster, who is married to the writer Hunter Davies, told *The Independent* yesterday: "I think it would be a misunderstanding to think this was a love letter. Don't forget Dennis Potter was a writer, and writers and artists do sometimes send letters and use phrases which other people wouldn't. There was the drawing of the heart, but one shouldn't read everything into it. May be he was just being sarcastic when he talked about my looks."

"I don't think Dennis Potter was this great philanderer he is being made out to be, and his plays reflected his personal life. I think he was actually a fantasist and the whole thing got blown out of all proportions." "I don't recall him being much of a philanderer at Oxford, he certainly did not try anything with me. His fiancée, Margaret, was with him almost all the time and I spent more time talking to her than him. Dennis seemed more interested in politics than sex."



Kindred spirits: Meg Ryan plans to write and star in a new biopic of tortured poet Sylvia Plath

Sweet Meg gets serious with agony of Sylvia Plath

Saccharine Hollywood star battles against image to play tortured poet

IN THE NEWS

MEG RYAN

MEG RYAN made the Hollywood big league by playing quirky, neurotic women in romantic comedies. Now, it seems, she is fed up with her wholesome image. Her next project is to produce and star in a film about Sylvia Plath, the poet and feminist icon.

Apert, perhaps, from Goldie Hawn, it is difficult to conceive of an unlikely actress to play the tortured Plath, who committed suicide in 1963 while married to Ted Hughes, now poet laureate.

But according to industry gossip, the star of *When Harry Met Sally* and *Sleepless in Seattle* is fixated by Plath and has ordered numerous copies of *Birthday Letters*, the recently published volume of poems in which Hughes finally gives his perspective on their turbulent marriage.

Ryan's commitment to the venture represents not only a professional volte-face. It also confirms suspicions that her carefully cultivated off-screen persona - cutesy, vulnerable, unsophisticated - is just a facade and that she is, in reality, a tough businesswoman. For one thing, she is aware that Hughes jealously defends Plath's memory and that, as executor of her literary estate, he has taken robust action against such works as unauthorised biographies. She has, reportedly, assembled legions of lawyers to fend off any attempts to block the film.

Ryan, 36, is now far more than just a bankable actress. Through her own production company, Prufrock Pictures, which she set up in 1992, she has become a Hollywood powerbroker. She is writing the script

for the Plath movie herself. "What Ryan wants, she gets," said one industry insider.

A friend of Hughes said yesterday: "I can't imagine that he will be overjoyed by the prospect of this latest film."

For all that she gushes in interviews - about her wonderful husband, film star Dennis Quaid, her adorable son, Jack Henry, their 200-acre ranch in Montana - there are subjects that she refuses to address.

Her mother, Susan Jordan, for instance, Ryan has not spoken to her for nearly 10 years, not even when she underwent surgery for breast cancer. Jordan, who has never met her grandson, said in a bitter newspaper article a few years ago: "The image she (Ryan) has of the innocent, dizzy girl-next-door could not be further from the truth. In real life, she's a cold-hearted, cruel manipulator." The gossipmongers say she never forgave her mother for leaving the family home in Fairfield, Connecticut, to pursue an acting career, leaving her husband, Harry Hyra, to bring up Ryan - then known as Peggy - and her three siblings.

Last year, she told an interviewer: "I admire Sylvia Plath because she was fighting the good fight in her head, trying to survive day by day." Ryan will not give up her project without a fight.

MOST MEMORABLE SCENE
In *When Harry Met Sally*, Ryan described a crowd of New York City people as "a bunch of people who are taking her seriously." Professionally, she is a "fashioned" actress, and she is "a bit of a diva" in the industry.

MOST UNLIKELY ROLES
In *The Doors*, Ryan played Jim Morrison's drug-addicted girlfriend. She was equally unconvincing as a Gulf War officer in *George Under Fire*, as an alcoholic in *When a Man Loves a Woman*, and as a deranged killer in *Deadly Intent*.

LADLE ON THE SYRUP
On motherhood: "I spend so much time changing nappies and I love it. On Dennis Quaid: "It's easy to be in a marriage with someone who does what you do if you respect him, and Dennis is an amazing actor." Quaid on Ryan: "She's vibrant and positive."



Plath: Ryan's target

Brighton's gay men ignore advice on safe sex

By Jay Merrick

GAYS in one of Britain's main hot spots for HIV-transmission are still practising widespread unsafe sex, according to the largest survey conducted of the homosexual community.

Project Zorro, a survey of the sexual lifestyle of gay men comes at a time when Brighton's HIV infection rate has increased at 12 times the national average.

Gay activists claim that anti-HIV spending has often not been clearly targeted at gay men, despite the fact that most infections involve them. In Brighton, the figure is 90 per cent.

Zorro researchers, whose report was largely funded by the local gay business community, collated evidence from 1,200 gay and bisexual men in the town, producing unequivocal evidence that widespread knowledge of safe sex practices was not matched by actual sexual habits. An estimated one in three sexual acts was unsafe.

A quarter of gay men sur-

veyed did not know or ask about the HIV status of their sexual partners; at least three-quarters, including a significant slice of these in long term relationships, indulged in casual sex with "trade"; many thought HIV infection levels were static or even falling; the use of Aids helplines was minimal; and gay men tended to avoid using clinics for sexually trans-

The only HIV prevention measure that received a qualified thumbs-up was the health authority's annual distribution of tens of thousands of condoms. "They've been doing it the same way for 10 years and it's now clear it isn't working," said Mr Ledward. "So something new has to be tried. They should work with gay community groups to put HIV back on

problems and less than £80,000 was targeted on gay men, who accounted for 60 per cent of all HIV cases. In the north west London boroughs of Brent and Harrow, the lion's share of prevention is directed to ethnic issues despite the fact that the majority of HIV infections involve gay or bisexual men.

East Sussex Health Authority spent £5.7m on HIV and Aids prevention and care last year, and will spend £7.4m in 1998-99. With increasingly large tranches used for important drug treatments, spending on prevention has remained static at £1.1m. Of that, about £750,000 is supposedly ringfenced for gay men, bisexuals and injecting drug users.

Today, Mr Ledward and the Project Zorro committee will ask East Sussex Health Authority to appoint a gay HIV prevention co-ordinator; direct about £50,000 into prevention activities and establish a specifically gay STD clinic. The health authority said it did not wish to comment in advance of the publication of the report.

'We're paying the price for everybody thinking it was sussed here. Gay men do not associate themselves with HIV'

mitted diseases (STDs). James Ledward, a Project Zorro organiser, described Zorro's key findings as "deeply disturbing."

"What the research shows very strongly is that gay men do not associate themselves with HIV. We're paying the price for everybody thinking it was sussed down here. But it isn't."

the agenda to make gay men start taking responsibility for their health.

Gay pressure groups in other parts of Britain have felt equally excluded and bitter about cross-funding of HIV prevention cash into non-gay categories. In Bristol, nearly £1m from the HIV prevention budget was spent on drug subculture

Camelot rapped over number blunder

By Clare Garner

THE National Lottery organisers, Camelot, were yesterday warned that there must not be another blunder following a costly error on the debut of its TV scratchcard show.

The Lottery watchdog, Oflot, has taken a firm stance with Camelot, insisting that a serious mishap such as the one which occurred on last night's live show must never happen again. They have told the multi-million pound lottery organisers that no charities must suffer due to the error when the wrong set of balls was fed into a lottery machine prompting another draw to be made after the show had been screened.

The BBC2 programme,

called *The National Lottery Big Ticket* and screened for the first time on Saturday night, has already been criticised for breaching BBC guidelines. The programme, which incorporates the weekly National Lottery draw, depends on people buying TV Dream scratchcards for a chance to be on the show and compete for a £100,000 jackpot.

Oflot has launched an official inquiry into the operation which is estimated will cost hundreds of thousands of pounds in extra pay-outs. A spokesman for Oflot said: "We are concerned about what happened and have made it clear to Camelot that this must not happen again. We were also concerned that charities do not

suffer, but Camelot is bearing the full cost of the error."

The error was due to a problem with machine number three in the draw when balls numbered between 21 and 40 were used instead of a full set of numbers from 21 to 50, according to a spokeswoman for Camelot. "We did not realise until after the third draw," she said. "Auditors from Oflot and Price Waterhouse were present for another draw after the show which included balls numbered from 21 to 50."

After the first draw, the programme - hosted by Anthea Turner and comedian Patrick Kielty on BBC1 - went back to its pre-recorded format. The Camelot spokeswoman added: "We will honour both sets of

numbers. It will mean that in effect, two sets of numbers were drawn instead of one."

The first set of numbers was 49, 11, 35, and 55, but was later amended to 49, 11, 31, and 55 after the third number was re-selected. Viewers stood to win varying amounts if they had had any of the balls in the right order. They won £10 for the first ball, £50 for the first two, £1,000 for the first three and £50,000 for the fourth.

All extra pay-outs will come out of Camelot profits, but the full extent of the cost will not be known until after the 16-week programme has ended.

■ Saturday's winning National Lottery numbers were: 11, 13, 23, 28, 29, 37, bonus 8.

Silent Series

The pinnacle of Yamaha's 100 year musical heritage: instruments you can't hear

Yamaha Silent Violin

Yamaha Silent Piano

Yamaha Silent Brass

Yamaha DTX electronic drums

This is no April Fool. After years of making instruments the whole world wants to listen to, Yamaha's unique blend of craftsmanship and technology has created a range it doesn't have to. Silent Series represents a new order in instrument development. Practice in private, inside your headphones, where every musical nuance is faithfully reproduced. And outside, barely a whisper, the world doesn't notice. It's a giant leap for music kind, a blow against noise pollution... buy one for your neighbours.

For more information call 01904 346238 or write to Yamaha-Kemble Music (UK) Limited, Sherbourne Drive, Tisbury, Wiltshire, SN13 9JF.

YAMAHA

How 'Donnygate' knocked Sir John's dream off course

SET IN acres of green Yorkshire countryside, the Victorian splendour of Rossington Hall is a symbol of hope to the children with special needs who go there to learn.

But to Newcastle tycoon Sir John Hall the listed building was the ideal centrepiece for his £200m regeneration plan to create one of the largest leisure and business complexes in the north of England.

Rossington Hall was to become the Yorkshire version of Wynyard Hall - the Hall family's 5,300-acre estate south of Newcastle.

Sir John's son Douglas, who last week quit as vice-chairman of Newcastle United after making adverse comments about supporters and Newcastle women, was made chairman of Rossington Hall Investments, the firm behind the project.

The council-owned school building was to be the clubhouse for a championship golf course which would be part of the European professional tour. The plan included enclaves of highly exclusive "fairway" homes, strategically positioned in and around the golf course.

Told that the 2,300-acre scheme would create 14,000 jobs, Doncast-

lan Burrell and Tim Laxton on the part played by the Geordie tycoon in Yorkshire regeneration

er council, led by insurance salesman Gordon Gallimore, embraced the project when it was proposed in 1991. The councillors wanted to sell Rossington Hall to the developers, conditional on planning permission being obtained. The scheme was approved by the council in January 1995 and referred to the Department of the Environment.

But Doncaster's progress towards regeneration was dealt a devastating blow last year, when allegations emerged of serious corruption within the council. The scandal was dubbed Donnygate.

In December, Mr Gallimore, then chairman of the Doncaster North Constituency Labour Party and chairman of the Doncaster Regional Committee for the Co-operative Retail Society, was suspended from the party amid allegations that he had accepted an inappropriate gift from Doncaster 2000, a joint venture property company in which the council was involved.

The brains behind the Rossington Hall scheme was Malcolm Clark, 58, a chartered surveyor and chairman of the Rossington Labour party. Mr Clark, like Sir John Hall, had cut his teeth in property as a surveyor for the National Coal Board.

In 1991, Mr Clark joined RHI, which had been set up in the name of his wife Kathleen, their son Julian and two directors of Professional Golf Association European Tours.

The same day that Mr Clark took up his new position, Cameron Hall Developments, then controlled by Sir John, took a 76 per cent stake in the company and Douglas Hall was made chairman. Douglas became chairman of Cameron Hall in 1993, and took his father's majority shareholding in the company last year.

The remaining 24 per cent stake in RHI was taken by another company, Designaim, also set up by Kathleen and Julian Clark. Mr Clark joined them as a director and shareholder after leaving the Co-op.

The planning battle to make the dream of Rossington Hall into a reality has lasted nearly seven years. During this period, RHI has battled hard to get across its point of view and has run up costs over £1.8m.

Mr Clark, who has worked tirelessly on the scheme, has earned over £400,000 in consultancy fees paid by RHI to Designaim and another company he controls, Designaim Developments.

In 1993, Rossington Hall and four other unconnected residential sites were included in the Doncaster Unitary Development Plan, which marked out the blueprint for the town's future.

Then, despite council support, the project was dealt a seemingly mortal blow last year by a DoE inspector whose inquiry into the scheme found major faults and said it was contrary to national and regional planning guidance.

Mr Clark is still trying to resurrect the scheme - now as a 2,500-jobs project - but the council, which has undergone radical changes in the last year, has withdrawn its support. Last week he was uncontactable, believed to be holidaying in Barbados.



Sir John Hall (left) with Gordon Gallimore, the leader of Doncaster borough council in January 1995 when the council approved the Rossington Hall project
Photograph: Roy Ingram

For long term mortgage VALUE make Nationwide your No.1 choice



If you're looking for a mortgage that provides excellent value both now and in the long term, your search is at an end.

Quite simply, it pays to decide Nationwide.

Whatever your needs, we offer a wide range of different types of mortgage - including discounts, cashbacks and fixed rates.

As the World's No.1 Building Society, we are committed to remaining

customer owned. With no dividends to pay to shareholders, we're free to use more of our profits to ensure ongoing mortgage value, today and for as long as you stay with us.

No wonder Nationwide mortgages continue to pick up awards for long term value from independent financial experts - including What Mortgage magazine's prestigious Best National Lender for both 1997 and 1998 and

Your Mortgage magazine's Best Overall Lender 1997/98.

So make it your No.1 priority to find out more. For more information call into your local branch, find us on the Internet at www.nationwide.co.uk or for an instant quote and a decision in principle within an hour call us on 0800 30 20 10, quoting ref. IN99, (lines open 8am - 8pm Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm weekends).

It pays to decide...



The World's No.1 Building Society



Typical example assumes a standard variable rate of 8.10% throughout the term of the loan. Rate correct at time of going to press. A couple (male and female), non-smokers, aged 25 applying for a £40,000 endowment mortgage over 25 years on a purchase price of £60,000. Monthly interest payments will be £249.75 net of MARS at 10%, APR 8.5% (variable). Total Amount Payable £121,455, which includes 300 mortgage interest payments, final repayment of capital, solicitor's mortgage costs of £100 excluding VAT (and assuming the same solicitor acts for both of us), a valuation fee of £175 which is refunded upon completion and redemption fees of £40. A typical monthly endowment premium is £64 (variable) which is not included in the monthly interest payment shown. For loans exceeding 75% of the purchase price or the valuation, whichever is the lower, an additional charge will be made. We charge a £25 administration fee if you do not insure your property through Nationwide. Nationwide Building Society, Nationwide Life Limited and Nationwide Unit Trust Managers Limited represent only the Nationwide Marketing Group which is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority for life insurance, pensions and unit trust products. Nationwide Unit Trust Managers Limited is also regulated by IMRO. Please note that for various legal, regulatory and customer service requirements, your call will be recorded. Mortgages are subject to status, valuation and security. Available to those aged 18 or over only. Written quotations available on request. Nationwide Building Society, Nationwide House, Pipers Way, Swindon SN38 1NW.

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

Straw orders inquiry over security blunder on Blairs' home

JACK STRAW, the Home Secretary, yesterday ordered an immediate inquiry after sensitive documents about Tony Blair's constituency home were made available to the public in an apparent security blunder.

Complete files on plans to protect the Blairs' Victorian home in Trimdon, County Durham, have reportedly been available at the public records office at Sedgefield District Council.

The *Sunday Times* said yesterday it had seen a planning application detailing proposed security arrangements at the Blairs' home, made within days of Labour's general election victory last May. For £11.75, a reporter was able to view this security "blueprint" at the records office and was even allowed to draw sketches. The application revealed a secret route so the Blairs could escape a terrorist attack and the location of almost a dozen infra-red cameras and motion sensors to detect intruders in the garden. Yesterday a Home Office spokesman said Mr Straw had asked for the material to be withdrawn.

John Stalker, former deputy chief constable of Greater Manchester Police and an expert on terrorism, said detailed security arrangements on the Blair family home would be "absolutely priceless" to a terrorist cell.

Fears grow for boy lost on loch

CONCERN is growing for the safety of a 16-year-old boy who disappeared after the boat he was sailing in capsized in the freezing waters of Loch Lomond.

A police air-and-sea search for Stephen McCallum, of Kirkintilloch, has so far failed to trace the teenager who has been missing since 1am yesterday morning. His friend Stephen Smith, 17, who was also in the dinghy, managed to swim to shore to raise the alarm. Yesterday Inspector William Brown of Strathclyde Police, who is co-ordinating the search, said: "We are continuing an extensive search of the area." The boys had been camping with about 20 friends on the west shore of the loch near the holiday village of Tarbet.

Compensation for truck drivers

BRITISH lorry drivers who were caught up in French farmers' strikes have been told they will finally receive compensation for their loss of earnings. It was revealed today.

The news could mark the end of a year-and-a-half battle by the Road Haulage Association to gain compensation for the lorry drivers affected by the industrial actions in 1996 and 1997. But in a press statement today, the RHA said it remained "cautious" about the news despite negotiating a new compensation formula with French officials in January this year.

The negotiations followed December's landmark judgement by the European Court of Justice against the French government for breaching the rules of the single market and failing to stop protesting farmers. More than 1,000 British truck drivers were stuck in the week-long disputes which brought France to a standstill. It cost haulage firms millions and 24 independent drivers went bankrupt as a result of the action. So far the French Government has only paid-out four payments totalling £800 to four individual British companies. It has been estimated that total compensation will exceed £1.5m.

Yates fights Hutcheon verdict

PAULA YATES said yesterday she was seeking legal advice in a bid to overturn a coroner's verdict of suicide on her lover Michael Hutcheon.

Miss Yates, 37, said she refused to accept that the INXS singer committed suicide and said that Hutcheon thought it was the most cowardly act in the world. "In no way do I accept the coroner's verdict of suicide," she told Australia's Channel 9 network's 60 Minutes programme. She added that although Hutcheon was depressed, their baby Heavenly Hiraani Tiger Lily was his great reason to live. "He wouldn't have left her - never, never, never, never, never," New South Wales Coroner Derek Hand found in February that Hutcheon, 37, committed suicide while in a state of depression, partly over Ms Yates's child custody dispute with Bob Geldof, her former husband. Ms Yates was speaking during a trip to Australia, in which she visited suite 524 at Sydney's Ritz-Carlton Hotel where Hutcheon died.

'It fell off the back of a lorry, guv'

A NATION of Arthur Daleys was revealed today in research which showed one person in 10 admits to buying stolen property in the past five years.

Among young men, nearly half had either bought or been offered "dodgy" goods. The market in stolen property sold in pubs and clubs, door-to-door and through dishonest shopkeepers is worth at least a billion pounds a year, the Home Office study found. Home Office minister Alun Michael vowed to crack down on the illicit deals, by developing tactics which would make stolen goods "too hot to handle", and called on potential purchasers to insist on seeing proof of ownership of any goods. Kent police will pioneer a scheme to try to reduce burglaries by making it too hard to sell the goods taken.

0800 30 20 10



Duke's fury at dodgy Roller

HRH the Duke of Edinburgh was adamant that he fly the flag on his recent visit to New York. His minions made it clear to our Washington embassy that Prince Philip expected to be driven about the Big Apple in nothing less grand than a Rolls Royce. However, Ambassador Sir Christopher Meyer was loathe to send the embassy's magnificent Rolls some two hundred miles north, even for the Queen's husband. Arrangements were made with a Manhattan dealer to supply a car, but the best they could come up with was "something off the lot". Unfortunately, the reconditioned Roller suffered a number of mechanical problems, including losing its windscreen wipers. Prince Philip reacted with his predictably gracious charm. Perhaps this explains why Liz Smith, a leading New York gossip hack, accused the Duke of having offended nearly every single person he met during his visit.

Princely return to health

Meanwhile, Pandora joins with the BBC in welcoming Prince Philip home safely. In fact the BBC spent all day Sunday rehearsing for his demise, as is their charming, costly, ghoulie practice when it comes to Royal deaths. In a White City studio, Anna Ford (pictured) led a hand-picked team of Auntie's finest journalists in honouring the "late" Duke, including a script made up of fictitious quotes from real celebrities. William Hague's imaginary tribute said: "The death of Prince Philip has deprived the nation of one of its unique assets." Perhaps even the Boy Wonder could have produced something more flattering than this lukewarm praise in real life. Speaking of reality, hasn't the BBC practised more than enough of this sort of grim programming recently?



MP's look to hand of God

More ingenious solutions are being formulated to Tony Blair's ban on MP's visiting the World Cup this summer. Brian Wilson, the Labour MP for Ayrshire North who wrote an official history of Celtic, is planning a series of important trade missions to Paris, Bordeaux, etc. Meanwhile, Pandora has learned of a group of fervently religious Scottish MP's who are planning to visit France's holiest Catholic pilgrimage sites this summer. They feel sure the Prime Minister's religious devotion will allow them, if caught, to excuse their presence at Cup matches by producing snapshots of them on their knees at Lourdes. Pandora salutes this blind faith in their leader.

Pandora



On the move: Hayley Johnson, eight, with her winning entry in the child category of the Independent on Sunday/First Direct photography competition. Each of the 68 winning pictures can be seen inside the back of London taxis and at the Barbican Centre reception until 12 April. Full results in next week's *loS*



Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Catholic order confesses abuses

By Alan Murdoch in Dublin

AN international Roman Catholic teaching order has issued a public apology to all its past pupils who suffered from an often brutal regime of beatings and abuse while in its care.

The message, in large advertisements in yesterday's Irish national newspapers, has followed five years of increasing revelations of brutality in Christian Brothers (CB) order in its day, boarding, and its industrial schools where homeless and disadvantaged boys were sent. Half a million Irish pupils

are estimated to have passed through its Irish schools alone since the Fifties. Parallel CB teaching orders have run schools in Britain, Australia and elsewhere.

The apology comes as members of the order faced civil actions and criminal charges over long-term sex abuse allegations in its schools in Salt Hill in Galway and Artane, Dublin.

Last December, a Waterford-based former member faced 122 sex assault charges covering a period from 1977 to 1990. Tomorrow five brothers will appear in court facing a total of 76 charges over the Galway case.

Among leading Irish figures educated by the Christian Brothers have been former Taoiseach Charles Haughey, current premier Bertie Ahern, and Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams. Others include writer Roddy Doyle, the late actor and comedian Dermot Morgan, former foreign minister Dick Spring and BBC director-general John Birt.

Mr Birt told in 1992 how he had returned to his old school and told pupils what it was like to be in the school 25 years ago. "I think you could have heard a pin drop when I talked about the regime. It was a highly-regimented form of education,

underpinned by corporal punishment. You got beaten just for being there. They were very strong on rote learning and for any who fell down there was always summary justice." But he added the system was "brilliantly successful" in getting pupils through exams.

Christian Brothers' schools and orphanages in other countries also saw allegations of ill-treatment. Orphanages in Western Australia run by the CBs to which hundreds of Irish and British youngsters were sent under migrant schemes, later became the focus of widespread reports of sex abuse. This was admitted by the order

there in 1993, also through press advertisements.

The order was founded in 1803 by the Kilkenny-born Edmund Ignatius Rice whose first school opened the way to an international educational system. Rice was beatified by the Pope two years ago.

In 19th century Ireland, in the absence of state schools, the teaching order provided cheap education for young people unable to afford fees charged elsewhere. Past pupils in its Irish boarding schools have told of being flogged for whispering in dormitories, for bed-wetting and trivial offences.

The apology says "Over the

past number of years we have received from former pupils serious complaints of ill-treatment and abuse by some Christian Brothers in schools and residential centres. We, the Christian Brothers in Ireland, wish to express our deep regret to anyone who suffered ill-treatment while in our care. And we say to you who have experienced physical or sexual abuse by a Christian Brother, and to you who complained of abuse and were not listened to, we are deeply sorry."

"The organisation also advertised helplines for those wishing to talk of their experiences or obtain counselling."

The UK's Best Buy

When other retailers continue to offer 233MHz or slower, lower spec models, Time cuts out the middleman to offer this 266MHz Pentium II processor based system with an amazing specification at a sensational price of just £936 +VAT!

Buy now with INTEREST FREE CREDIT and pay NOTHING until 1999, not even a deposit on the best buy 'S' models. Take a closer look at the details and you will agree that this truly is the UK's best PC deal!

266-2

PowerPro PC™

- 266MHz Intel Pentium® II processor
- 64MB RAM
- 6400 baud modem
- 32x MAX CD-ROM
- 512K Pipeline burst cache
- 16K Pipeline burst cache
- 4MB AT AGP x2 Rage Pro 3D graphics
- 3D variable sound
- 50000 stereo speaker system
- 8MB Gold speech recognition (microphone with 5 models only)
- Microsoft Windows 95 and over 5000 of the best quality software
- 80 minute VHS video loader
- Year 2000 compliant
- 14 Day money back guarantee (excluding carriage costs)
- 14" SVGA colour screen (15" optional extra)
- ADX tower system with all standard features

PowerPro PC™ 14" 386 17 377

266M-2 £936 £1162.08

PowerPro PC™

Best buy model as 266-2 above but with: Pentium III 333MHz processor with 64MB RAM, 6400 baud modem, 32x MAX CD-ROM, 512K Pipeline burst cache, 16K Pipeline burst cache, 4MB AT AGP x2 Rage Pro 3D graphics, 3D variable sound, 50000 stereo speaker system, 8MB Gold speech recognition (microphone with 5 models only), Microsoft Windows 95 and over 5000 of the best quality software, 80 minute VHS video loader, Year 2000 compliant, 14 Day money back guarantee (excluding carriage costs), 14" SVGA colour screen (15" optional extra), ADX tower system with all standard features. Product code 14" 386 17 377

300-2 £1099 £1291.33

PowerPro PC™

As 266-2 above but with: 333MHz Intel Pentium II processor and 128MB RAM, 6400 baud modem, 32x MAX CD-ROM, 512K Pipeline burst cache, 16K Pipeline burst cache, 4MB AT AGP x2 Rage Pro 3D graphics, 3D variable sound, 50000 stereo speaker system, 8MB Gold speech recognition (microphone with 5 models only), Microsoft Windows 95 and over 5000 of the best quality software, 80 minute VHS video loader, Year 2000 compliant, 14 Day money back guarantee (excluding carriage costs), 14" SVGA colour screen (15" optional extra), ADX tower system with all standard features. Product code 14" 386 17 377

333-2 £1189 £1397.08

PowerPro PC™

As 300-2 above but with: 333MHz Intel Pentium II processor, 64MB RAM, 6400 baud modem, 32x MAX CD-ROM, 512K Pipeline burst cache, 16K Pipeline burst cache, 4MB AT AGP x2 Rage Pro 3D graphics, 3D variable sound, 50000 stereo speaker system, 8MB Gold speech recognition (microphone with 5 models only), Microsoft Windows 95 and over 5000 of the best quality software, 80 minute VHS video loader, Year 2000 compliant, 14 Day money back guarantee (excluding carriage costs), 14" SVGA colour screen (15" optional extra), ADX tower system with all standard features. Product code 14" 386 17 377

43 UK Showrooms

PowerPro 'S' Models

These include 5 top games (PSP £145, joystick, headset microphone and over 13 CD multimedia titles) for just £299 +VAT - £118.50 inc. VAT. Product code 266-2 14" 386 17 377, 300-2 14" 386 17 377, 333-2 14" 386 17 377

FreePhone Time Now!

0800 771107

Time COMPUTER SYSTEMS



Pay Nothing Until 1999 INTEREST FREE CREDIT

Pentium II

IBM Gold Speech Recognition

Interest Free Until 1999

43 UK Showrooms

PowerPro 'S' Models

These include 5 top games (PSP £145, joystick, headset microphone and over 13 CD multimedia titles) for just £299 +VAT - £118.50 inc. VAT. Product code 266-2 14" 386 17 377, 300-2 14" 386 17 377, 333-2 14" 386 17 377

FreePhone Time Now!

0800 771107

Time COMPUTER SYSTEMS

43 UK Showrooms

PowerPro 'S' Models

These include 5 top games (PSP £145, joystick, headset microphone and over 13 CD multimedia titles) for just £299 +VAT - £118.50 inc. VAT. Product code 266-2 14" 386 17 377, 300-2 14" 386 17 377, 333-2 14" 386 17 377

FreePhone Time Now!

0800 771107

Time COMPUTER SYSTEMS

43 UK Showrooms

PowerPro 'S' Models

These include 5 top games (PSP £145, joystick, headset microphone and over 13 CD multimedia titles) for just £299 +VAT - £118.50 inc. VAT. Product code 266-2 14" 386 17 377, 300-2 14" 386 17 377, 333-2 14" 386 17 377



Photo: WWF Nepal

Adoption Papers

Name: Manau Pothi
Age: 9
Sex: Female

Adopt a tiger, before it's too late

With as few as 5,000 tigers remaining in the world today, time is quickly running out for this beautiful animal. Manau Pothi is a Bengal tiger living in the Royal Bardia National Park. The park should offer relative safety to Manau Pothi. So far she has been lucky to avoid the threat of poachers that brutally slaughter the tigers for quick profit. Tigers are not only killed for their magnificent striped pelt - their bones are in demand for traditional Chinese medicine used by Asian communities around the world. As the species rapidly decreases, the price for each kill continues to rise.

The poachers aren't Manau Pothi's only enemy. In the last two decades alone, over a million hectares of forest have been lost to industrialisation and agricultural land, which means their food resources are shrinking along with their natural habitat. Without the shelter of their natural environment, the tiger has even less hope for survival - unless we act now.

You can help stop the slaughter by adopting Manau Pothi

Just £2 a month helps protect Manau Pothi and other tigers from the horrors of poaching. With your support, WWF can fully equip and maintain anti-poaching mobile patrols in Asia and the Russian Far East. By monitoring the tigers, WWF can ensure they live and breed in a safe habitat, a habitat that gives them the chance to re-establish a natural home for themselves.

For adopting Manau Pothi, you'll receive a certificate, a photograph of her, plus quarterly updates on her progress throughout the year.

Please help keep the future of the tiger alive. Adopt Manau Pothi for yourself or a friend, her life could depend on it.

WWF-UK, FREEPOST, Panda House, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1BR

DIRECT DEBIT

Authorised to debit my bank/building society account for my Direct Debit payments.

1. Name and full postal address of bank/building society: _____

2. Name and full postal address of payee: _____

3. Amount: £ _____

4. Frequency: ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Other: _____

5. Signature: _____ Date: _____

6. Bank/building society name: _____

7. Branch: _____

8. Postcode: _____

9. Telephone: _____

10. Email: _____

11. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

12. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

13. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

14. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

15. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

16. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

17. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

18. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

19. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

20. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

21. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

22. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

23. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

24. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

25. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

26. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

27. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

28. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

29. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

30. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

31. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

32. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

33. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

34. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

35. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

36. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

37. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

38. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

39. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

40. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

41. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

42. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

43. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

44. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

45. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

46. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

47. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

48. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

49. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

50. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

51. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

52. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

53. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

54. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

55. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

56. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

57. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

58. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

59. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

60. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

61. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

62. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

63. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

64. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

65. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

66. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

67. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

68. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

69. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

70. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

71. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

72. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

73. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

74. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

75. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

76. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

77. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

78. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

79. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

80. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

81. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

82. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

83. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

84. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

85. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

86. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

87. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

88. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

89. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

90. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

91. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

92. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

93. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

94. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

95. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

96. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

97. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

98. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

99. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

100. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

101. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

102. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

103. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

104. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

105. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

106. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

107. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

108. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

109. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

110. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

111. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

112. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

113. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

114. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

115. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

116. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

117. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

118. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

119. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

120. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

121. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

122. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

123. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

124. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

125. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

126. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

127. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

128. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

129. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

130. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

131. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

132. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

133. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

134. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

135. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

136. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

137. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

138. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

139. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

140. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

141. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

142. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

143. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

144. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

145. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

146. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

147. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

148. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

149. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

150. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

151. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

152. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

153. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

154. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

155. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

156. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

157. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

158. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

159. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

160. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

161. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

162. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

163. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

164. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

165. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

166. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

167. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

168. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

169. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

170. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

171. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

172. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

173. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

174. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

175. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

176. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

177. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

178. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

179. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

180. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

181. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

182. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

183. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

184. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

185. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

186. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

187. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

188. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

189. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

190. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

191. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

192. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

193. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

194. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

195. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

196. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

197. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

198. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

199. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

200. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

201. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

202. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

203. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

204. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

205. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

206. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

207. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

208. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

209. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

210. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

211. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

212. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

213. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

214. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

215. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

216. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

217. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

218. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

219. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

220. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

221. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

222. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

223. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

224. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

225. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

226. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

227. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

228. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

229. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

230. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

231. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

232. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

233. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

234. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

235. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

236. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

237. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

238. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

239. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

240. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

241. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

242. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

243. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

244. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

245. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

246. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

247. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

248. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

249. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

250. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

251. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

252. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

253. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

254. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

255. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

256. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

257. I agree to pay my Direct Debit by the date specified above.

258

Soaring sterling: Cheaper imports are on offer due to the strength of the currency and turbulence in South-east Asian markets – but exporters are suffering

Strong pound brings Britons bargain breaks

By Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

BRITISH consumers can look forward to a summer of bargains thanks to the strong pound. At home clothing, footwear and electrical goods will be better value, while on holiday they will be able to buy more for their money.

Economists said yesterday that the pound was likely to remain strong until the end of the year, meaning that consumers have some time to take advantage of the situation.

"The pound has got strong very quickly," said Michael Hughes, group economic adviser to Barclays Capital. "By virtue of that some people are not aware of what's going on."

Adam Cole, UK economist for HSBC, said: "With goods such as electrical products and clothing the trend is quite clearly downwards." He added: "Wages, on the other hand, are going up so this boosts consumer spending."

Clive Vaughan of Verdict Research said the most striking difference would be not that goods got cheaper but that consumers would get better

quality for the same price. He added: "We have done a lot of work on footwear and retailers are saying that because of the strong pound the quality of the product is going to be better."

"So, for example, the inside of the shoe is more likely to be leather and the workmanship is better."

"The same is true for clothing. You are more likely to find Italian styling at a very, very competitive price. We also expect to see great value for money on electrical goods because of a combination of the strong pound with the problems in South-east Asia."

Demand in a lot of Asian countries is expected to fall because of the currency difficulties. The financial turbulence means that overseas sales will be more important and keener prices will follow to make sure sales are maintained.

Other imports that may fall in price are cars and wine. "But that may not necessarily be the case because the price reductions may not be passed on to the consumer by the retailer," said Mr Hughes.

"The car market is fairly buoyant at the moment so the

retailers may not feel the need to pass the cut prices on. So you may not see your Mercedes getting cheaper."

The other way that consumers will benefit is when they go abroad. "We are getting very unusual complaints," said Jackie Gibson of the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA).

"There are some people who have booked early and then the second editions of the brochure have come out with cheaper prices, as people have taken advantage of the different exchange rate. Some of the companies have offered refunds although others haven't."

She said that those on self-catering holidays would reap the benefits. "The average amount we spend on holiday is almost as much as the holiday itself costs – we spend on average £360 on holiday and £320 cash when we are there. The biggest value is going to be on things you actually spend out there."

She said that particular areas people should look out for were Greece and South-east Asia. Mr Hughes agreed. "Too many hotels have been built in South-east Asia and so you can get four or five star hotels at low prices," he said.

"For instance, a hotel which would normally cost £220 a night you could get for £75. There are also a lot of competitive flights to that region."

"Sterling is also stronger against European currencies than the dollar so you won't get many bargains in America," he added.

Sunworld said that there "had never been a better time to head for Greece," with drachma standing \$24.42 to the pound. Dinner for two costs on average \$4.75 per person and a bottle of suntan lotion £2.86. Buying wine and beer at a supermarket would work out at £1.90 for the wine and 38p for the beer.

Lunn Poly said that City Breaks to European cities were also proving popular because of the strong pound.

However, there is some less welcome news for consumers.

"The disadvantage is that the longer the pound stays strong the worse news it is for British industry," said Adam Cole.

"Exports are not as strong and the implications are that employers may be looking at the number of people they employ."



Take it easy: The strength of the pound will give a big boost to the purchasing power of British tourists, particularly in Greece after the devaluation of the drachma and in Asia where hotel rates have plummeted

Fearful fashion groups predict collapse

By Nigel Cope

FASHION groups are worried that the combination of the strong pound and financial turmoil in the Far East could bring some of the industry's top names to the brink of collapse.

Many have been caught by the double whammy of the rising UK currency, which is making their goods more expensive in export markets, and the virtual disintegration of the Far Eastern luxury goods sector. Countries such as Japan, Singapore and Malaysia have traditionally proved a lucrative source of income for fashion houses and luxury goods companies, but most Far Eastern consumers can no longer afford the prices.

One director of a top UK fashion group says: "At the top (luxury) end I would say there is risk of collapse is quite high." Another UK retailer said: "I would not be surprised to see a top fashion name – European or American – fall victim to all this."

He added that selling luxury goods in the Far East was next to impossible. "The top end of the market has just disappeared. It has almost got to the stage where it doesn't matter how much you charge for things. People aren't going to buy them anyway."

The deteriorating trading conditions have already caused some top UK houses severe problems. Mulberry, the British luxury goods group which makes luggage and filofaxes, has issued a series of profit warnings because its exports to markets such as Japan have been hit so hard. Burberry, famous for its raincoats and trademark checked scarves, has been another victim. Its sales in the Far East have been affected while sales in its UK shops have been hit by lower tourist spending because the strong currency has made its merchandise so expensive.

The companies hit hardest are those that manufacture in the UK and export to European and Far Eastern markets. Firms that buy goods from the Far East at least get the benefit of the strong pound in reverse. They are able to source their goods more cheaply in the Far East because the UK currency now has so much more buying power. Mulberry recently decided to close a factory in Somerset and move more manufacturing to European markets such as Spain.

SPENDING POWER IN EUROPE

The devalued drachma means Athens is now the best value-for-money city for visiting Britons.

Tourists taking trips to the Greek capital are now getting 26 per cent more drachmas to the pound than a year ago. Next best value cities are Dublin (offering 19.1 per cent better exchange rates) and Lisbon (up 15.28 per cent), according to figures compiled by American Express. John Howells, the company's UK and Ireland foreign exchange director, said: "The growth of sterling means that spending money will go a lot further this spring."

He went on: "Every element of the holiday will be affected – accommodation, transport, entry to museums and galleries as well as eating and drinking."

Here are the top value-for-money cities showing how much further the pound will go in March 1998 compared with March 1997

CITY	INCREASE IN SPENDING POWER
Athens	+26.31%
Dublin	+19.17%
Lisbon	+15.28%
Amsterdam	+13.86%
Berlin	+13.70%
Brussels	+13.67%
Madrid	+13.62%
Paris	+12.91%
Rome	+11.53%
Geneva	+7.90%

ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPICE

MARE ST. LONDON E8 4SA
(Charity Ref. No. 231323)

A Thought for Easter

"For all the happiness mankind can gain is not in pleasure but rest from pain." John Dryden (1631-1700)

Day after day, night after night you have helped us to provide rest from pain. May the happiness gained be yours as well this Easter and always.

Sister Superior

Wave goodbye to guilt to boost your feel-good factor

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

BON VIVEURS enjoy better health than their guilt-ridden peers, despite their questionable habits. In a study of the balance between pleasure and guilt, psychologists have found that while eating and drinking to excess is foolhardy, being merry goes some way to compensate for the damage.

Researchers from Hull University asked 300 people to list their main sources of enjoyment

and record their feelings about them. They were also questioned about their health. The results showed that people who rated their pleasures highly had fewer episodes of colds and flu and went to the doctor less while those with more guilty feelings were more susceptible to illness.

The survey contained some surprises. Sex and shopping were rated equally highly for pleasure, but shopping was associated with more guilt. Eating chocolate and watching

Neighbours on TV produced high levels of guilt. Having bubble baths and, surprisingly, flirting, were the only highly pleasurable activities that were rated entirely guilt-free.

Some respondents named unusual sources of pleasure such as fighting and winding people up. Smoking cannabis was highly rated for pleasure and brought little guilt.

Dr Geoff Lowe, who presented the findings to the British Psychological Society's annual conference in Brighton

yesterday, said the current dos and don'ts promoted by health educators could produce perverse effects.

"Maybe we should think more about pleasure and less about guilt. We have to have guilty feelings to turn us off those habits that are bad for us. But if we enjoy our pleasures and we don't feel bad about them, that may be better for our health. Enjoyment is good for us," he said.

Other research has shown that psychological well being is

related to immune function and pleasure can enhance it. Chronic guilt may increase levels of stress hormones which are known to deplete immune function. He added that the importance of enjoyment applied even to behaviour which was acknowledged to be bad for health, like smoking. "If people smoke and get a lot of pleasure out of smoking and feel little guilt they may suffer fewer harmful effects than someone who smokes and feels guilty about it. There is then a

double whammy effect – they suffer the ill effects of smoking and those of feeling guilty about it."

Babies in the womb can distinguish an English folk dance tune from a Welsh lullaby and remember it weeks later after birth, psychologists claim.

Psychologists from the Universities of Keele and Bath played music to pregnant women from the 20th week of pregnancy and saw a visible response in the babies when it was played to them a fortnight af-

ter the birth. If confirmed, the finding suggests foetal learning begins weeks earlier than had been thought. Stephen Evans, who presented the findings to the British Psychological Society, said the findings had implications for the care of premature babies in hospital where they were exposed to noisy ventilators which could affect the development of their hearing. Efforts should be made to mimic more closely the environment of the mother's womb, he said.

After 1990, 1990

Green only

Tel: (0345) 699777

Buy an Audi registered after 1990 and you'll always find it fitted with a catalytic converter.



Audi

Audi Approved Used Cars. Voreprung durch Technik as we continue to say.

Please phone above number for details.

مركز الدليل

Islands
40,000
mines

Student

ND

Broness
Rosie
Dr John
Dr Geoffrey
Tony
Diana
Carol
Chris

Full
Red
Sub

Neil Stewart

Fearful
fashion
groups
predict
collapse

Falklands plagued by '40,000' landmines

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

LANDMINES left over from the Falklands war may prevent Britain from fulfilling its obligations under an international treaty banning the weapons.

Official figures say 14,000 anti-personnel mines have remained uncleared on the islands since the 1982 war, though some estimates have put the figure at nearer 40,000.

They are creating a major headache for Whitehall officials because Britain does not have the technology to clear them. Under the Ottawa Treaty, due to be ratified by MPs in the autumn, the UK will have 10 years to complete the work.

Attempts during the 1980s to develop equipment capable of detecting and clearing the mines were abandoned when it became clear that 100 per cent effectiveness could not be guaranteed. Islanders said they did not want to risk mine-clearers' lives in clearance operations when even a 1 per cent failure rate would mean they still could not use their land. Twenty square kilometres of beach and former farmland are out of bounds to islanders.

The problem is that the mines are plastic, and fiendishly difficult to detect. They are also buried in shingle and peaty soil which moves around and which makes using vehicles for the work very difficult.

A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence said Britain might have to ask for an extension to the 10 year clearance period. "Clearly we are committed to the Ottawa Treaty but the Falklands do present particular difficulties because of the nature of the terrain. We are

currently considering how to deal with this in the light of our treaty obligations," he said.

Yesterday the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency's technical manager with responsibility for the Royal Engineers' equipment said that although the latest technology might be adaptable to the job, he had not been asked to look into it yet. John Hambley said that during the 1980s, experts had looked at either burning or digging up the mines by remote control as well as at detecting them with ground-penetrating radar systems. However, all the methods had their drawbacks.

"The decision was made that it was better to leave the mines where they were. What we had was not going to be reliable enough, and it was still quite costly," he said.

The Royal Engineers have cleared about 1,400 mines since the war, mostly in sensitive areas. But they did so by lying on their stomachs and using probes, a painstaking and labour-intensive process. For example, they cleared a path to a windmill so that local people could gain access to carry out maintenance work.

Wendy Teggart, general manager of the Falkland Islands Government's London office, said the islanders had felt that even if the mines were cleared they might not be confident enough to use the land.

"As a Falkland Island mother myself I would not be happy with my children playing on an area that was cleared," she said. "With the best will in the world, someone could say they believed it was clear when it was not."



Play time: Warrant Officer Pete Hammonds (centre) and a colleague taking a break with some of the Bosnian children whose future they are trying to safeguard

Photograph
Jim Loring

Lethal legacy for the innocent victims of war

Army experts in crusade to help the children of Bosnia. Hazel Southam reports

IN THE central Bosnian town of Sipovo, 11-year-old Zora Kukilo has never heard of Diana, Princess of Wales, or her work against landmines. But her life may be saved because of that work.

Zora is among over 100 children who are being taught landmine awareness by the British Army. Her home and school were destroyed by Croats retreating from the area after the Dayton peace agreement two years ago.

She lives in the centre of a 500 square mile minefield. Army experts aren't sure of the exact number of mines which threaten the people of this poverty-stricken place, but there are an estimated 15 million in the country.

Zora has not yet seen a landmine. But she knows "they are dangerous," and would, she says, "go and tell Pete" if she found one.

Pete is Warrant Officer Pete Hammonds, who works with Staff Sgt Taff Meadows, of the Sixth Battalion REME, to educate the children about the hidden perils they face.

The children, mostly aged about seven years old, stand in an empty hall in their newly-rebuilt school. All that decorates it are a dozen pictures of Jesus, brown rabbits and fruit which they have drawn and glued to the windows.

They are dirty, poorly

dressed, with blackened milk teeth, and small for their age. A few have bright eyes, but most have the glazed expression of children who have simply seen too much pain. Charity workers say that every family in Sipovo lost at least one member during the war.

Sgt Meadows explains how landmines can kill or maim, shows them what the devices look like, and tells them how to escape from a minefield should they inadvertently stumble into one.

"You must get some stones and put them on the floor to show everybody that this is a minefield," he explains. "You

must go home and tell your parents or your teacher."

Sadly, it's not always as simple as that. Major Paul Sadler, anaesthetist at the nearby army field hospital, still remembers the day that a dozen children were rushed in having been injured while playing in a minefield. One six-year-old boy was dead on arrival, his right hand side blasted with shrapnel wounds. "It was very distressing. The injuries the landmine had caused were absolutely horrendous," he says.

Sgt Meadows asks his class if any of them have ever seen landmines before. Several report having seen devices in the

nearby Muslim village of Volari, which comes as a shock as only yesterday we watched children playing in the rough ground around burnt-out houses in an area which an elderly villager had told us was safe.

This perhaps explains the key to the British Army's landmine training scheme. The children see landmines when they play and are now being trained to be their parents' teachers, warning the adults of hidden death traps.

"They are the future for Sipovo," says the troops' commander, Major Graham Belgum, himself a father of two young children. "We must en-

sure their survival and so we have a vital role to play in educating them about the landmines that they could discover. It's all about helping them have a future."

But there are massive hurdles to overcome. Sgt Meadows recalled talking a group of teenagers who said they helped their fathers plant landmines around their homes and land as a protection against the retreating Croats.

"Planting landmines is normal for them," says Sgt Meadows. "But I'm aiming at the children because they are the ones who will make changes in the future. Hopefully, when they are grown up they won't want to plant landmines any more."

STUDENT CHOICES

Thursday 2 April 1998
Business Design Centre, London N1

INDEPENDENT INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

One day national conference to consider up to date research into the impact of student fees and loans on student choices in higher and further education. A conference for university vice-chancellors and senior management, college principals and chief executives, admissions deans, entrance administrators, student services providers, college marketing officers and head teachers to examine options for action in response to the new funding structure.

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

- Baroness Blackstone**, Minister of State, Department for Education and Employment
- Rosie Boycott**, Editor, *The Independent* and *The Independent on Sunday*
- Dr John Brennan**, Director of FE Development, Association of Colleges
- Dr Geoffrey Copland**, Vice-Chancellor, University of Westminster
- Bill Eyres**, Corporate Affairs Manager, Co-operative Bank
- Tony Higgins**, Chief Executive, UCAS
- Diana Warwick**, Chief Executive, Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals
- Carole Whitty**, Headteacher, Carisbrooke High School
- Chris Yapp**, Managing Consultant, ICL

CONFERENCE FEES,

Full Rate
Reduced Rate
Supported Rate

Total: £293.75
Total: £217.37
Total: £141.00

For more information, please contact:

Neil Stewart Associates

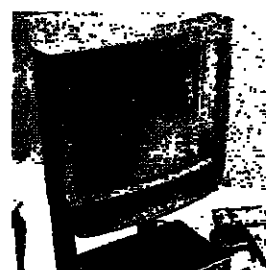
11 Dartmouth Street
London SW1H 9BL

tel 0171-222 1280
fax 0171-222 1278

Midland Bank plc is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and only advises on its own life assurance, pensions and unit trusts. C6/55



Liver



Heart



Brain

Insurance for serious illness is now as easy and cheap as household insurance.

The world of serious illness insurance can be confusing. That's why Midland has set out to make insuring yourself as straightforward as insuring your car or home. It can cost as little as £10 a month to provide the average family with a lump sum and policies are designed to pay out within 28 days of being diagnosed seriously ill. Midland's free pack will give you all the details.



Midland Bank

Member HSBC Group

Call 0800 783 2299

Call for details



or visit a branch



or cut the coupon.



For your free protection pack, complete and return the coupon to: Midland Bank plc, Protection and Healthcare, PO Box 3, Southampton, SO15 1XS.

Mr/Ms/Mrs/Miss/Other (please specify)

Initials Surname

House name/number

Street

Town

County

Postcode

Daytime tel no (inc. STD)

Evening tel no (inc. STD)

BPS

Do you hold other Midland accounts? ☐ Yes ☐ No (please tick)

If so please fill in your sort code May we send you information about our products and services in future? ☐ Yes ☐ No (please tick)

Robertson digs in to guard defence budget

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

A PEACE dividend for hospitals and schools has been ruled out by the Defence Secretary's refusal to slash his department's £22bn budget.

George Robertson's decision, following a six-month strategic review, will dismay many Labour MPs and disappoint some ministers, who are seeking more money for health and education in the Treasury's

comprehensive review of spending. Ministerial colleagues have told *The Independent* that they expected defence to be cut to fund higher spending elsewhere. But Mr Robertson is said to have the backing of Tony Blair and Peter Mandelson against any attempt to raid his budget.

Friends of Mr Robertson said Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, also supported the case for continued defence spending. "Clare takes the view

that there is still a case for a strong force in order to meet the peace-keeping duties," said a source.

Mr Robertson will tomorrow underline the need for powerful defence forces by setting out plans for extending their role to "defence diplomacy and conflict resolution". He will use the Winston Churchill memorial lecture in Luxembourg to advance the case for using armed forces to prevent conflicts, and for Britain's military strength to be used in new,

more constructive ways in future.

The new role will not come cheaply. Mr Robertson will make clear when he submits his plans to a cabinet committee. He will tell colleagues that he will be making cuts in some areas of defence, including forces in Germany, but will insist on keeping the savings for new defence contracts for helicopters and ships - possibly to include two new aircraft carriers. He plans to cut the defence reserve forces, and withdraw troops

and tanks from Germany in order to spend more money on beefing up the air and sea-lift capability.

Tanks could be mothballed near ports as part of a "park and fight" strategy. The out-dated Cold War strategy of fighting a frontal tank attack across Germany will be abandoned, but not all the tank forces will be withdrawn, to underline Britain's continued commitment to European defence with the US through Nato. The Tory defence cuts slimmed

down the armed forces in their existing roles, but Mr Robertson is planning a radical shift to a more mobile, hard-hitting force. He will tell cabinet colleagues that in order to sustain the forces in areas such as the Gulf, he needs more back-up capability. "The Tories kept saying they were cutting the tail without blunting the teeth, but it was a false analogy. They were cutting the lifeblood of the forces," said a source.

Britain will go ahead with the Eu-

rofighter project, in spite of Treasury opposition, and keep its nuclear commitment, but the Government is to wipe out a quarter of Britain's nuclear defence force tomorrow to honour Labour's election promise on disarmament. The Ministry of Defence said that all the outdated RAF freefall WE-177 N-Bombs will be removed at midnight, leaving the Trident submarine fleet as Britain's nuclear force.

Leading article, page 20

Robin and Gaynor name their big day

By Colin Brown

ROBIN COOK and his lover, Gaynor Regan, yesterday posed for photographs after confirming they are to be married on 19 April at Chevening, the Foreign Secretary's grace and favour residence in Kent.

"I am delighted that we are getting married at Chevening," he said. "It has given us rare intervals of privacy and we both think it right that our wedding should be where we have had our most peaceful times together."

"The last couple of months have been difficult for both of us but our commitment is greater and our love is deeper because of the experiences we have been through together."

"I hope our marriage will show that the true story of my private life is that it's a very content and fulfilled life with the woman I want to make as happy as she makes me."

The house, once a country retreat for the Prince of Wales, was admired by his ex-wife, Margaret, before their marriage break-up, which ended in divorce last month after 28 years. The taxpayer will not be picking up the bill.

The wedding clashes with Tony Blair's trip to the Middle East, so the Prime Minister will not be able to attend. However, the couple are planning a larger reception in London in the weeks after the wedding ceremony and it is possible that Mr Blair will attend that.



Happy couple: Robin Cook with his partner Gaynor Regan at his official residence, Chevening House in Kent, yesterday

Photograph: PA

Tories told to be more open

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

THE Conservatives have spurned the focus groups and spin doctors of New Labour, choosing instead to rely on the carefully targeted marketing strategies of businesses like the Asda supermarket chain.

At the final meeting of the old Conservative Central Council in Harrogate on Saturday, grassroots party activists were given a startling presentation by Bob Tyrrell, Professor of Strategic Marketing at the City University Business School, London.

Professor Tyrrell comforted his predominantly middle-aged audience with an analysis showing that in the run up to the next election there would be a dramatic fall in the number of people aged between mid-20s and mid-30s, while there will be a similar sized increase in the those aged 55 to 64.

"Perhaps some of the things more traditionally associated with conservatism will begin naturally to come into their own," he said. "Wisdom, reflection, sobriety, loyalty and tradition, as we become a more middle-aged culture."

But Professor Tyrrell said the Tories needed to become more open and accessible.

"A few years ago," he said, "I did some work on why Sainsbury's appeared to have fallen out of favour, and the cheeky chappies from Asda and places like that appeared to be doing so well."

That comment was greeted by laughter because Archie Norman, the boss of Asda, is now a Conservative MP, a vice-chairman of the party, and a driving force behind the creation of William Hague's new Conservative Party.

A package of democratically based reforms was overwhelmingly passed on Saturday by the one third of the 350,000 party members who bothered to vote.

Professor Tyrrell said that one of the reasons Sainsbury's had suffered was that it gave an impression of being detached, "of not having an ear to the ground - by contrast, as I say to one of your party vice-chairmen, you're going in the right direction".

That direction was set earlier in the day by Mr Hague when he indicated the target group of voters for his new policy - "people who don't have much time for transient, passing fashion".

"These are conservative people, their values, their instincts are ours. Our task is to win back their trust."

Although Mr Hague said he was about to embark on a journey to become the party of One Nation, he made no mention of the unemployed, the poor, lone parents, the disabled, or the socially excluded in his speech.

Fund-raiser at the centre of big-business row still in post

By Colin Brown

THE LABOUR official described by party spokesmen as "politically naive" and "middle ranking" after weekend disclosures over big-business donors wanting access to Number 10, is still in charge of "high-value" fundraising, it emerged yesterday.

Amanda Delew, nicknamed "De Lute" by colleagues, is one of the two "high-value" fundraisers for the party at the Millbank headquarters. Chris Smith, Culture, Media and Sport Secretary, played down the significance of the internal document written by Ms Delew in May after Labour's election victory and leaked to a Sunday paper, which said big donors would expect access to Number 10.

"The moment it got anywhere near senior officials they said this is completely inappropriate, not something that any party - any government - should do." It was leaked to embarrass Tony Blair in the wake of reports that he had offered access to Rupert Murdoch.

The officials said Ms Delew was "politically naive" and not head of the department. The memo was so obviously inappropriate it was "binned" by the head of her unit, a source said. But Ms Delew, who aimed to raise £15m by 2002, is still a leading player in the search for big donations.

She wrote a memo which said: "Major donors expect to be invited to Number 10; if this cannot take place then income levels may be affected."

David Heathcoat Amory,

shadow chief secretary to the treasury, said he would be writing to the Cabinet Secretary asking for an investigation into what he described as "the cash for access scandal".

"Labour's plans to use Number 10 as a fund-raising venue is an abuse of office. It is yet further evidence of their arrogance and contempt for accepted standards of probity Labour's high-value donors programme appears to be intended to be a 'Gold access card' to the Prime Minister."

Those charges were denied by Labour Party sources, who said that Downing Street was not used for party fundraising events. "It would be wrong to use taxpayers' hospitality to raise party funds, but it does raise the question about what is acceptable," said a source.

Ms Delew is on maternity leave and is shortly to have a baby. She was shocked to see her memo leaked 10 months after it was binned.

In her early 30s, Ms Delew is a committed member of the Labour Party. Her background is in fundraising for charities.

A friend said: "She is very professional, and personable but her background is in fundraising, not party politics." Her memorandum was sent to a limited number of people within the Labour Party office at John Smith House, before officials moved to Millbank Tower.

There are fears within the party that it was leaked by someone who may have been disenchanted at being sacked after the election, as the party had to cut down its staffing numbers.

Field plans boost for the over-75s

By Colin Brown

PENSIONERS over 75 are likely to get an extra bonus to deal with poverty, Frank Field signalled yesterday, but the social security minister did not support a restoration of the link between pensions and earnings.

Mr Field, who is due receive a report on the review of pensions within days, will disappoint pensioners' campaigners, led by Baroness Castle, the veteran Labour peer, who are calling for all state pensions to be raised substantially. The increase in state pensions well above the inflation level for those aged over 75 will be a cheaper way of tackling hardship where poverty is

greatest. "If you look at who are the poorest pensioners then in fact the older we get, not only the frailer we get, the lower our income gets," Mr Field said.

Government sources also confirmed ministers were looking at special help for the over-75s. In the long term, there are signals ministers will seek to move most people on to compulsory top-up "stakeholder" pensions, requiring contributions of at least £1-2 a week extra to increase the payout in retirement.

Mr Field yesterday also said on BBC *On The Record* that he and Harriet Harman received letters from Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister's official spokesman, "telling both of us off" for per-

sonal clashes over the green paper on the reform of the welfare state.

Mr Field, who unveiled the document last week, yesterday said he believed it was "quite serious" to get a letter about the leaks from someone as senior as Mr Campbell.

"He certainly wasn't happy that briefing was going on and I think he had every right to say so and to write those letters," said Mr Field.

The reform package will help the Government to answer a warning yesterday by the independent think tank, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, that in spite of efforts by the Blair government to tackle social inequality, the gap between rich and poor remained wide.

How to be happier in hospital.

Get tax-free cash for every night you're there!

WPA "Health & Sickness" Plan. 16 tax-free cash benefits costing from under £5 a month for you, or £10 a month for you and your partner. Children under 18 are free! Another answer to your healthcare needs from WPA. We have many more! Call us free and without obligation.

WPA **WPA answers**
0500 41 42 43

Western Provident Association Between 8am - 6pm weekdays quoting IN 30M

People are happy with WPA

The Canon MultiPASS™

can print

can fax

can copy

can scan

YOU AND CANON CAN

For further information about our MultiPASS™ range, just call freephone 0800 0350350.

www.canon.co.uk

Canon

...ism of
 ... chat
 ...ons at
 ...airstrip
 Space
 a bit tight!
 ... with a low
 ... APR
 ... 619 903
 ... LONDON
 ... ANYTIME
 ...

Baptism of fear that begins at the airstrip

PRAISE God I was never in the Russian army. I don't know which the poor conscripts sent to Afghanistan must have feared most, their guerrilla opponents or their own helicopter transports.

En route to the start point for our walk-in to Everest, we had head-splitting, body-shaking rattle through the hillsides in just such a machine.

Conditions for the 45-minute flight from Kathmandu to the Lukla airstrip were pretty good, with the snow-decked giants of the Himalayas marching to one side. But even so, when the helicopter was shrouded in cloud, there was an uncomfortable sensation that the terraced hillsides were only a few hundred metres below.

Then, as we climbed higher, tree-clad slopes and rocky ridges were alongside us. Exhilarating but not a form of flying I want to make a habit of.

Pilot Vachislav Ovcharenko and flight engineer Nicolai Shonarov had probably flown the shuddering machine in more hostile circumstances but the language barrier made it hard to be sure. Gold-toothed smiles were the response.

The Russian-built helicopter was crammed to capacity. The 24 passengers, including all our Himalayan Kingdoms Everest team, were strapped in on bench seats running along the sides and between us was piled rucksacks, barrels, mattresses and all the paraphernalia of expeditioning.

Our landing on the stony airstrip was surprisingly gentle. Lukla has a frightening reputation but it is light aircraft passengers who really get the scare. The short runway slopes down the hillside and arriving aircraft seem certain to slam into the hotel at its uphill end. The wife of Sir Edmund Hillary was killed in a crash here and bits of wreckage testify to other unhappy landings.

Lukla, perched at 2850 metres above the Dudh Kosi river, is just to the south of the Khumbu, the Sherpa homeland, and is the gateway to



STEPHEN GOODWIN
Everest Diary
Day Five

Everest. We walk at a leisurely pace, but this seeming sloth is deliberate. Altitude sickness can occur at any time above 2500 metres, and hurrying now could snuff a summit bid.

For four of our team, including myself, this is our first visit to Nepal. Crowded, polluted Kathmandu was hardly a culture shock to anyone who has travelled outside Europe, but up here, the head reels to take in the soaring natural beauty and cultural differences.

The dusty track that winds north from Lukla up the valley of the Dudh Kosi to the Sherpa capital of Namche Bazaar teems with bent bodies as the M1 does with trucks. The portering work is no longer generally done by Sherpas. Most of the porters are slight men, boys and occasionally girls from lower Nepal, some barefoot, carrying all manner of goods, produce, building materials and fuel in wicker baskets. The weight is taken by a plaited rope across the forehead and looks brutally uncomfortable. But even when handed a rucksack with the latest in strap technology, the straps are ignored and a rope attached.

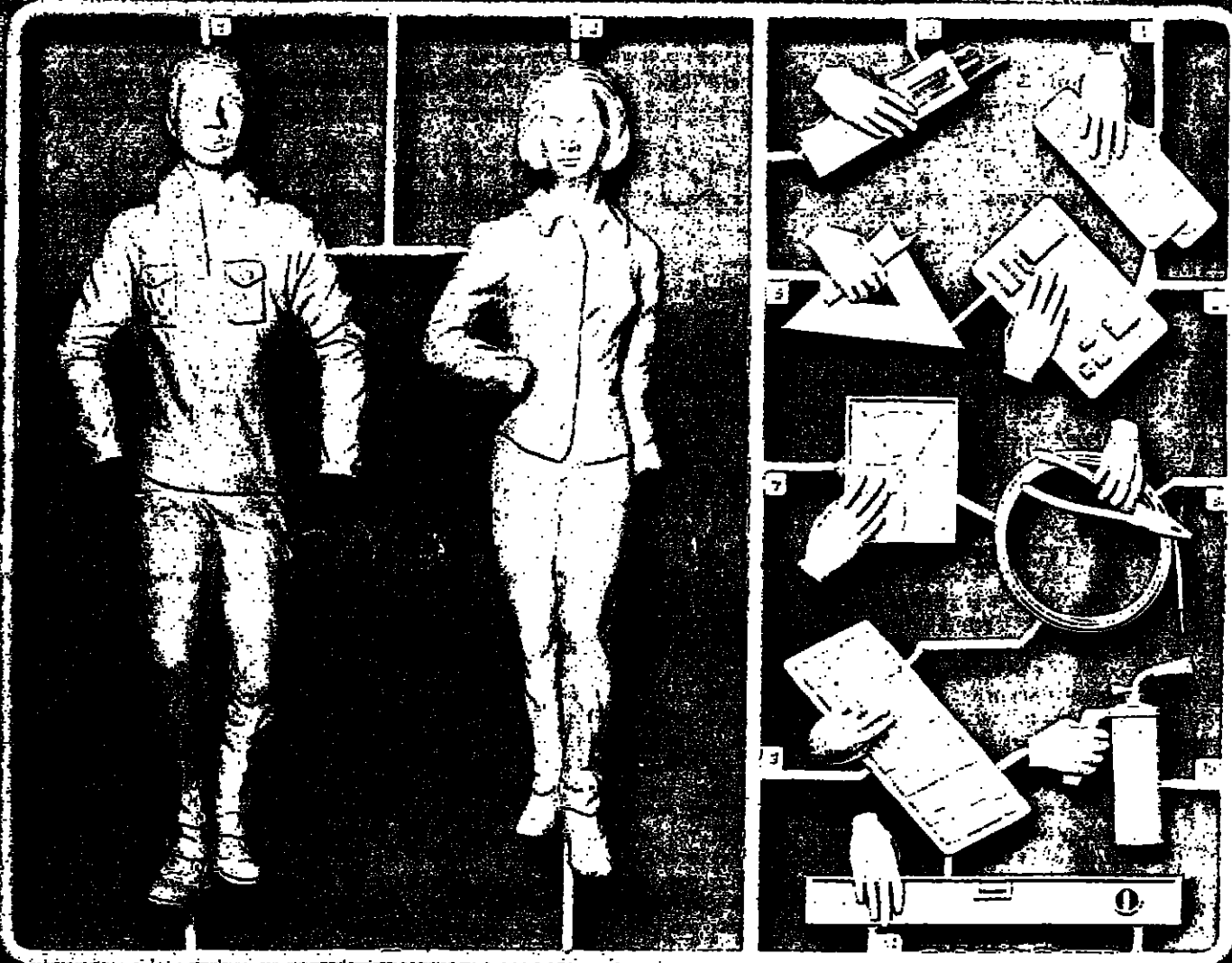
For a Himalayan virgin like myself, there is a pang of conscience at having a lad in flip flops carrying not just my own heavy-bag of kit not needed on the day walk, but another equally bulky sack. Raju is just 12 years old and probably carrying twice his own bodyweight. He won't come any higher than Base Camp, but even so, a cynic might wonder which one of us is really climbing Everest.

Tomorrow: snow in Namche Bazaar



White man's burden: Sherpa porters, often children aged 12 or less, carry most of the supplies and equipment needed by climbers attempting the Himalayan peaks. 'The Independent's' Stephen Goodwin, top, found himself with a boy in flip-flops carrying his gear. Typically, a porter could be carrying twice his or her bodyweight, suspended by a rope around the forehead.

Main photograph: Tony Wheeler



DAILY POEM

Flightline

By Micheal O'Siadhail

At the core of all the jazz's lavish promise:
Just to keep on playing, to improvise what is.

Saxman Keith Donald told me when the solo moves
It's loose and certain as the promise of loves.

"I'd know," he said, "the true line after one bar,
As if trusting one another we'll play what we are."

Those riffs foregone, adornments you had to eschew,
The siren's sweetness that waits so deep in you,

Between moments endured and moments of the dream,
Singleness of purpose, utter obedience to a theme.

Nothing show-off. Lean flightlines. Grace to soar.
Shaping and shaped by a promise at the music's core.

This poem comes from Micheal O'Siadhail's new volume *Our Double Time* (Bloodaxe, £7.95). Formerly a Dublin-based academic, specialising in the Irish language, he has published two previous collections of poetry.

Space a bit tight?

Move with a low cost mortgage rate.

- It's easy to transfer.
- Our mortgage rate is 8.2% APR variable.
- Call us now for more details.



0181 649 9099 0161 831 9099 0141 221 9099
LONDON MANCHESTER GLASGOW
CALL ANYTIME 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and
9am to 5pm Saturday.
Please quote ref. IND192
www.directline.co.uk

Subject to status. Available to England, Scotland and Wales. Security required. Rate correct as shown. Subject to underwriting. Written quotations on request. YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT. Calls recorded and randomly monitored. Direct Line and the red phone are trademarks of Direct Line Insurance plc, used with its permission.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN MODEL EMPLOYEE

... JUST FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE STEPS.

- 1 You will need one vacancy or training place and one enthusiastic school leaver. Match up school leaver with vacancy, and check how they fit together.
- 2 Apply National Traineeship, devised by the business community to provide employers with the skilled people they need.
- 3 Find out about support available from Training and Enterprise Council, and enlist their help to design desired programme.
- 4 Help your trainee develop vital workplace skills such as IT, numeracy and communication, up to NVO level 2.

Only with you have helped give a school-leaver a good start in the world of work. Phone 0144 66 55 56 for more information.



NATIONAL TRAINEESHIPS
THE MAKING OF A SCHOOL LEAVER

Gonzalez casts long shadow on Spain's left

By Elizabeth Nash
in Madrid

DESPERATE to dispel the long shadow of the former leader Felipe Gonzalez, Spanish Socialists this weekend launched a campaign for primaries for the first time in their party's 120-year history.

A former Socialist minister, Josep Borrell, has challenged the party leader, Joaquin Almunia, to a duel over who should be Socialist candidate for prime minister, even though national elections are still two years away. Mr Borrell formally threw his hat into the ring - but the metaphor has been stretched to preposterous lengths in recent days - on Saturday at a 20,000-strong rally of the party's mighty Andalusian federation in Mr Gonzalez's Seville heartland.

Mr Borrell muscled his way on to the platform to pledge his loyalty to Mr Almunia but, in



Josep Borrell: Ex-minister throws hat in the ring

the next breath, declared that the party's performance in opposition must be improved.

Felipe Gonzalez has been going about recently sporting his tan suede bomber jacket: a sure sign that he, too, is on the campaign trail. Mr Gonzalez quit as leader in a bombshell decision last June and is not standing again. His blessing has fallen upon his decent, competent successor, Joaquin Almunia.

Mr Gonzalez, who was narrowly ditched by the electorate two years ago, remains the favourite of the party faithful. He was star of the Seville rally

and continues to dominate the Socialist scene. That suede bomber jacket has witnessed too many victories to be written off as a mere relic of past glories.

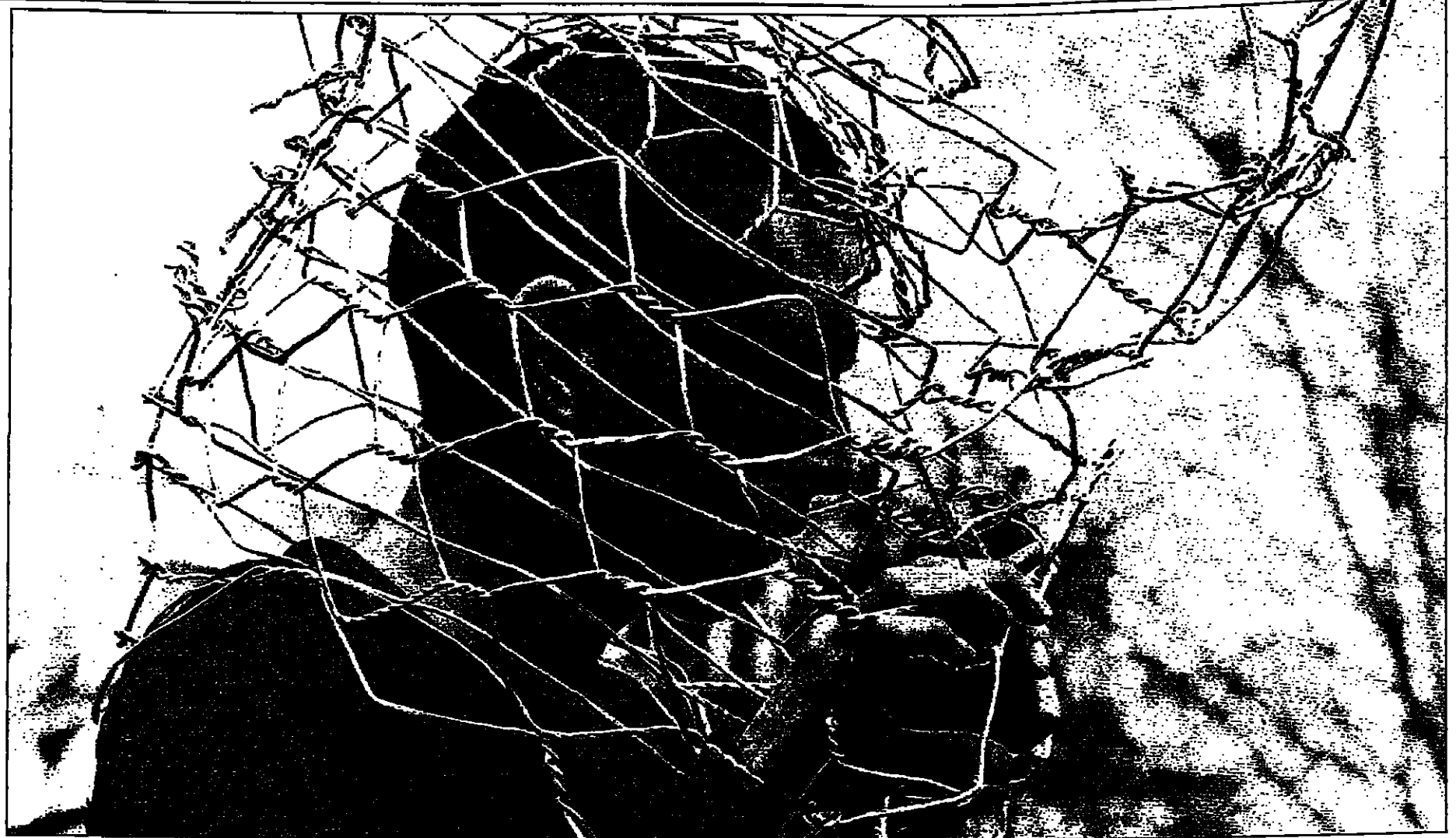
Spanish Socialists - like Britain's Tories - are still finding their feet in opposition after 14 years from 1982-96 in which Mr Gonzalez was prime minister. They often talk as if they are still in government. Many feel Mr Almunia lacks both charisma and new ideas. He is not the man, they argue, to forge a post-Gonzalez force that can see off the conservative Prime Minister, Jose Maria Aznar.

Step forward Josep "Pepe" Borrell, a smooth and pushy former public works minister in the last Socialist government. "We must stop pining for Felipe," he says. Mr Borrell's smug manner has been picked up by the television satire show *Puppet News*, which dubs him "Know-all" and "Mega-pepe". But the entry of a competing contender has spiced up the Socialist leadership process, which used to be a dreary affair of power-broking behind closed doors.

Party members will vote on 24 April, and surveys in yesterday's newspapers suggest Mr Borrell is breathing hard down Mr Almunia's neck. Mr Borrell - a Catalan - seeks to overturn the received wisdom that a Catalan Socialist could not be elected nationwide. He has not, however, sought explicit endorsement from the powerful Catalan Socialist Federation, led by the former defence secretary and devout "Felipista", Narcis Serra.

Even if Mr Borrell loses the nomination, his standing in the party has already been immeasurably strengthened, while that of Mr Almunia, even if he wins, has already been weakened, both by the challenge and the demonstration of support for his challenger.

The policy differences between the two are minimal - mutual buzzwords include employment, sustained development and openness - and are, as is customary in Spanish politics, coded and nuanced to court the party's various power blocks.



Voices of reason: One of the 20,000 people in Paris yesterday protesting against the alliances between the National Front and moderate right parties.

Photograph: AFP

France to reform polls after extreme right's success

PARIS (Reuters) - The French government said yesterday that it plans to introduce laws to tighten up the electoral system after local polls allowed the extremist National Front to gain a foothold in mainstream politics.

But the minister for parliamentary relations, Daniel Vaillant, warned that legislation alone would not halt the Front, branded by its opponents as a throwback to Hitler's Nazis. Tens of thousands of people demon-

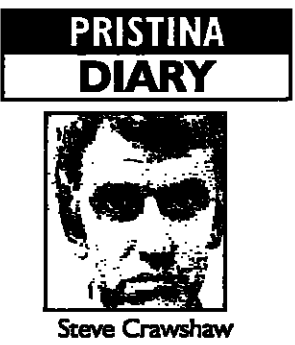
strated in cities throughout France on Saturday to protest against the Front and the regional conservative leaders who this month turned to the anti-foreigner party to keep hold of power in their areas.

The deals came after the Front won a record 15.5 per cent of the vote in 15 March regional elections, giving it the role of kingmaker in a number of councils.

Five regional presidents, all from the centre-right Union for French Democracy party (UDF), accepted Front backing to keep their majorities - a major breakthrough for the far-right party which had previously been shunned as a political pariah.

A land divided by hatred and schnitzels

WESTERN politicians have often trotted out the idea that the Balkan wars of recent years (based on an original idea by S Milosevic; all rights have been asserted) were somehow inevitable, because of "buried ethnic hatreds". This analysis, which allowed a hands-off attitude, was mostly garbage. Despite and because of the complex history, ethnic identity was genuinely subsumed in the Yugoslav idea. A Serb friend wistfully remembers summer encounters now lost for ever, when cars from Belgrade and Zagreb tooted at each other on foreign motorways, in a cheerful display of Yugoslav familial recognition. A Croat friend, who grew up near Vukovar, scene of some of the worst horrors of the Serb-Croat war, discovered only from the newspapers that a former classmate was linked with Serb war crimes. Until then, she had



Steve Crawshaw

thought of him as a fellow Yugoslav.

Kosovo, on the other hand, that's a different kettle of fish soup. When I first visited here 15 years ago, most of Yugoslavians was still (comparatively) living in ethnically wedded bliss. In Kosovo, however, armed policemen were patrolling the streets of the capital, Pristina. Serbs and Albanians have always led separate lives. Now, they scarcely

talk at all. In just a few days, a foreign journalist probably has more conversations with "the other side" than many Serbs or Albanians in a year. The foreigner is asked to report back from across the divide, because people do not like to ask each other questions directly. For an Albanian or Serb to start a conversation about politics with the Ethnic Other would be most people on both sides seem a ludicrous idea.

At the tiny, buzzing Avalon club in the centre of Pristina, a crowd gathers nightly to drink and dance into the early hours. It's friendly, relaxed - and completely Serb. Albanians have their own equivalent places. One Serb student at the Avalon described how she likes sometimes to go to an Albanian cafe. But, like the gay Albanian skinhead who can be found in the Avalon, she is the odd woman out: "My friends think I'm very strange."

As a foreigner, you enjoy all sorts of dubious privileges. One is to travel where nobody else can go. Once you have the right piece of paper, you can travel through checkpoints - passing through roadblocks where Albanians would be turned back, and travelling into territory which the Serb forces are wary of entering. At the checkpoints themselves, there is a strange etiquette. The first plus (and it is a big one): unlike in Bosnia, you do not come across madmen who have been drinking slivovitz plum brandy all afternoon, and who will now wave a gun in your face, steal your money, your computer or your car. The checkpoints are disciplined. But needling is part of the operation. The strani novinari, the foreign journalists, are seen as the terrorists' friend. "Who do you think is guilty?" becomes a challenging remark, not a straightforward question.

If an Albanian translator is marked on the travel permit but is not in the car, the policemen get tetchy, the suggestion is that you have smuggled an Albanian into bandit country and left him behind. Even your attire can become a subject for aggressive remarks. "Why have you got mud on your shoes?" demanded one policeman, who seemed keen to find a reason to thump us. "You've been with the terrorists, haven't you?"

That policeman, you can be sure, would happily kill Albanians. An increasing number of Albanians would happily kill him. For the moment, the shooting incidents between the two sides are sporadic. But, as in Croatia in summer 1991 and in Bosnia in spring 1992, when the atmosphere was in many respects eerily similar, "for the moment" is the key phrase. It seems likely to be a depressingly short wait.

In a way, it all comes down to schnitzels. One of the best known products of Serbian cuisine is the Karadjordjev schnitzel, named after the 19th-century Serb national hero. It is like chicken Kiev, but made out of meat, wrapped together with cheese. Very tasty it is, too. In a Pristina restaurant, I found something called a Skenderbeg schnitzel on the menu, and asked the waiter what it was. I probably should have guessed the answer, since Skenderbeg is Albania's national hero: a Skenderbeg schnitzel, it turns out, is a Karadjordjev schnitzel when served in an Albanian restaurant.

This society is so divided that even the menus lead separate lives - same taste, different loyalty. It would be nice to think there was room in Kosovo for Skenderbeg and Karadjordjev schnitzels to exist peacefully side by side. Nice, but unreal.

THE CAPITAL ONE FOOTBALL CARD

SEE THE WORLD CUP FINAL

COURTESY OF MASTERCARD

APPLY FOR THE CARD WITH THE LOWEST RATE IN THE UK

Apply for your Capital One Football Card before 14:05:08 and you, plus a partner, could win the trip of a lifetime to the World Cup '98 Final live in France, courtesy of Mastercard!

- Lowest rate in the UK - 6.9% APR fixed until January 1999
- Credit limit up to £10,000
- No Annual Fee

CALL FREE 0800 66 9000 TO APPLY

OR REQUEST A FREE INFORMATION PACK. PLEASE QUOTE 1800-231.

Capital One

Capital One Bank, Card Services, PO Box 317, Nottingham, NG2 2WD.

PRIZE DRAW RULES: 1. The draw is 1998 and open to everyone aged 18 or over except those involved in the promotion and execution of the draw. 2. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 3. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 4. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 5. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 6. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 7. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 8. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 9. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 10. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 11. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 12. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 13. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 14. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 15. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 16. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 17. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 18. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 19. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 20. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 21. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 22. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 23. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 24. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 25. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 26. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 27. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 28. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 29. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 30. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 31. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 32. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 33. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 34. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 35. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 36. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 37. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 38. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 39. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 40. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 41. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 42. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 43. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 44. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 45. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 46. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 47. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 48. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 49. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 50. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 51. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 52. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 53. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 54. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 55. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 56. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 57. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 58. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 59. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 60. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 61. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 62. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 63. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 64. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 65. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 66. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 67. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 68. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 69. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 70. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 71. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 72. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 73. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 74. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 75. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 76. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 77. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 78. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 79. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 80. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 81. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 82. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 83. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 84. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 85. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 86. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 87. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 88. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 89. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 90. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 91. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 92. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 93. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 94. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 95. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 96. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 97. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 98. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 99. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 100. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 101. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 102. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 103. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 104. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 105. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 106. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 107. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 108. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 109. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 110. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 111. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 112. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 113. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 114. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 115. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 116. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 117. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 118. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 119. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 120. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 121. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 122. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 123. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 124. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 125. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 126. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 127. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 128. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 129. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 130. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 131. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 132. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 133. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 134. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 135. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 136. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 137. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 138. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 139. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 140. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 141. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 142. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 143. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 144. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 145. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 146. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 147. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 148. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 149. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 150. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 151. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 152. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 153. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 154. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 155. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 156. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 157. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 158. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 159. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 160. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 161. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 162. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 163. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 164. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 165. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 166. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 167. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 168. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 169. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 170. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 171. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 172. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 173. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 174. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 175. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 176. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 177. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 178. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 179. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 180. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 181. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 182. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 183. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 184. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 185. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 186. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 187. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 188. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 189. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 190. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 191. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 192. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 193. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 194. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 195. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 196. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 197. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 198. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 199. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 200. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 201. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 202. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 203. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 204. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 205. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 206. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 207. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 208. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 209. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 210. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 211. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 212. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 213. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 214. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 215. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 216. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 217. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 218. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 219. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 220. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 221. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 222. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 223. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 224. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 225. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 226. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 227. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 228. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 229. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 230. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 231. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 232. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 233. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 234. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 235. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 236. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 237. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 238. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 239. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 240. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 241. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 242. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 243. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 244. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 245. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 246. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 247. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 248. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 249. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 250. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 251. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 252. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 253. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 254. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 255. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 256. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 257. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 258. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 259. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 260. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 261. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 262. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 263. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 264. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 265. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 266. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 267. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 268. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 269. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 270. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 271. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 272. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 273. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 274. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 275. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 276. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 277. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 278. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 279. The closing date for entries is 14:05:08 on 24 May 1998. 280. The closing date for entries is 14:05:

Arabs set high price for Israel to quit Lebanon

By Robert Fisk
in Beirut

ISRAEL is not leaving southern Lebanon. Despite all the honeyed words from Israeli officials, despite all the reports on CNN, despite the private suspicions of Arab diplomats who should know better - Israel is not going to withdraw a single soldier from its occupation zone 60 miles south of Beirut. Indeed, over the past few days, more Israeli troops have been sent into front-line positions previously held by Israel's proxy "South Lebanon Army".

True, Israel would like to leave. It lost 39 of its occupation troops in southern Lebanon last year and another eight have died in action in 1998; its Lebanese militia ally has lost a further 29 men in the same 15 months. Almost equally serious is the fall in casualties among Israel's Hizbollah enemies. While the guerrillas were losing as many as 100 men for every Israeli killed 10 years ago, they are now taking casualties on an almost one-to-one basis. Just 82 Hizbollah men have died in the past 15 months, only six more than Israel and its militia. The outcry from the mothers of Israeli soldiers serving in Lebanon grows.

Listening to Israeli politicians these past two weeks, the world might be forgiven for believing the mothers will get their way. Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister - who is not interested in abiding by UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 (calling for total Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territory) - suddenly announced he wanted to abide by Security Council resolution 425, which calls for a total and unconditional withdrawal from southern Lebanon. The Israeli cabinet, we are told, has "agreed" a withdrawal.

But Israel wants conditions at-

tached. It wants a promise that the Lebanese army will safeguard the border and prevent cross-border attacks. And it wants the Hizbollah disarmed before a withdrawal. The first desire is reasonable enough. But the second will never be agreed by the Arabs, for two reasons. Firstly, Syria wants Israel to withdraw from the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights, and Syria's support for the Hizbollah is the only pressure it can bring upon the Israelis to hand back Golan as well as southern Lebanon. Secondly - in the words of a former Lebanese diplomat - Israel, in the eyes of the Arabs, has run out of credit. "Oslo was a big test for us and for the Israelis," he said. "Israel signed the Oslo agree-

'We could disarm Hizbollah and the Israelis might find a reason to stay in Lebanon'

ment. But despite its signature, it is still controlling much of the West Bank and is building even more Jewish settlements on Arab land. What is to stop them doing the same thing if we agreed to their conditions for withdrawal from Lebanon?"

"We could disarm the Hizbollah, which is the only force pushing them to leave, and then the Israelis might find a reason to stay. And we could do nothing about it. We learned a lot from Oslo and we are not going to make the same mistake again. These deals need international guarantees, not just peace accords that can then be broken." In Cairo, the Arab League

rejected Mr Netanyahu's proposal for a withdrawal. Faraz Bourez, the Lebanese foreign minister, told delegates that if Israel wanted to abide by Resolution 425 - passed in 1978 after Israel's first invasion of Lebanon - then "it should just pack up and get out". In reality, numerous Hizbollah officials have made it clear the guerrillas would not pursue the Israelis over the border. Hizbollah has already set up a political organisation within Lebanon's own internal political structure to secure a future once the war is over. An Iranian government spokesman, the culture minister Atallah Mahejari, has himself said if Israel leaves Lebanon, there would be "no need to continue its resistance activities". Since Iran arms the Hizbollah - if less generously than America arms Israel - this was a significant remark.

The ironies of the situation, however, are all too clear. Whereas 20 years ago, the Lebanese demanded an Israeli withdrawal and the Israelis refused, now the Israelis are demanding a withdrawal and the Lebanese are turning them down. This has provided good propaganda for the Israelis. Here they are, vainly demanding to end their own occupation while the world accuses them of reneging on the "peace process". In truth, southern Lebanon is the only area where the Israelis are bleeding - literally - to hang onto occupied land; and the Arabs are not going to oblige them by letting them go.

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon have been in southern Lebanon for 20 years and have signally failed to complete their mission of moving up to the Israeli frontier and securing the sovereign territory of Lebanon for the Beirut government. UN forces are a mile further from the Israeli border than they were two decades ago.

Saddam's hat trick: Iraq's leader makes rare public appearances to rally support



BAGHDAD (Reuters) - President Saddam Hussein greeting villagers at al-Budoon, 110 miles from Baghdad, where he was regaling them with tales from his youth. Making a rare public

appearance at the weekend, he also visited two central Iraqi villages through which he fled 39 years ago after failing in an assassination attempt on President Abdul-Karim

Qassem. State television showed President Saddam firing celebratory rifle shots in the air at one village while locals danced and chanted support; he then prayed for Iraq's "hero-

ic endurance to be rewarded with victory", the station said. At the same time, UN inspectors scouring his palace at Tikrit for weapons.

Oldest synagogue excavated at Jericho

JERICHO (Reuters) - The world's oldest known synagogue has been excavated near the biblical town of Jericho, an Israeli archaeologist said yesterday.

The synagogue, within the complex of a Hasmonean palace, was built between 75 and 50 BC during the reign of Queen Salome or one of her sons and was destroyed by an earthquake in 31 BC, said Professor Ehud Netzer, of Jerusalem's Hebrew University.

At the site, archaeologists discovered the first evidence supporting ancient accounts that ceremonial meals, as well as

prayers, were held in synagogues. "It was a bit like a community centre" said Professor Netzer, who is supervising the dig. "We know the Bible was read three times a week, but there was also a room attached to the synagogue where religious meals were held."

Professor Netzer first uncovered the palace 25 years ago. Excavations continued until 1987 and were resumed early this year. Professor Netzer said the synagogue was in an Israel-controlled area of the West Bank, just outside Palestinian-ruled Jericho.

Peace process is near collapse, warns Albright

By Patrick Cockburn
in Jerusalem

THE American special envoy, Dennis Ross, met with Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, last night to discuss the extent of Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank as Washington warned that the peace process was on the verge of collapse.

Israel has insisted that the withdrawal will comprise no more than 9 per cent of the West Bank's territory while the US wants 13.1 per cent. Even this is well short of the 30 per

cent that the Palestinians expected under the terms of the Oslo agreement.

Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, earlier told Jewish leaders in America that the peace process was on the verge of collapse and that the US was considering ending its efforts. However, no ultimatum would be given to Israel.

The US wants its 13.1 per cent withdrawal to take place linked to Palestinian guarantees over security. Mr Netanyahu has suggested a lower figure but says the land handed over would be contiguous to existing Pales-

tinian enclaves on the West Bank.

The US has yet to go public with its initiative and Mr Netanyahu has asked it not to. Despite opposition from the extreme end of his right-wing coalition to giving back any of the land Israel conquered in 1967 to the Palestinians, the prime minister is in a strong position domestically and could deliver an agreement. The Palestinians would also accept a deal because they feel they have little alternative and want to improve their standing in Washington.

the university for industry

Monday 20 April 1998

Business Design Centre, London N1

A one day national conference for policy makers in higher and further education to look at the implementation of the Government's proposals on the creation of a University for Industry. It will examine the role that further and higher education institutions can play by working together and with business at a local, regional and national level increasing the skills and knowledge of the workforce, as well as supporting research and development in industry and commerce.

Speakers Include:

Dr Kim Howells MP,

Parliamentary Under Secretary, DfEE

Rosie Boycott,

Editor, The Independent and The Independent on Sunday

David Brown,

Chairman, Motorola Ltd and Chair, UFI Design and Implementation Advisory Group

Josh Hillman,

Institute for Public Policy Research

Simon Sperry,

Chief Executive, London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Diana Warwick,

Chief Executive, Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals

Dr Anne Wright CBE,

Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, University of Sunderland

C V C P

The voice of
UK universities

Higher
Education
Conferences

THE INDEPENDENT

D/EE

DELEGATE FEES

Full Rate £215.00 + VAT Total £262.00
Reduced Rate £125.00 + VAT Total £158.75
Supported Rate £147.50 + VAT Total £185.50

For more information, please contact:

Neil Stewart Associates

11 Dartmouth Street
London SW1H 9BL

tel 0171-222 1280
fax 0171-222 1278

PERSONAL LOANS

Splash out

With a Goldfish personal loan from only 12.9% APR*

Goldfish loans are available for up to £10,000. And on a £10,000 Goldfish loan, with 48 monthly repayments, you could save up to £566 compared with the lenders shown below.

What's more, as interest rates are fixed, your monthly repayments will never increase.

No security required. No arrangement fee. So now you can afford to splash out.

*On loans of £10,000

Typical example:

LENDER on a loan of £10,000	APR	48 monthly repayments	Total amount payable	What you could save with Goldfish
Goldfish	12.9%	£264.51	£12,696.48	
TSB Bank plc	13.8%	£268.33	£12,879.84	£183.36
Barclays Bank PLC	15.9%	£278.40	£13,363.20	£666.72
MENAI	14.5%	£271.35	£13,024.80	£328.32

These are based on a 1997/98. The rates quoted are for new customers. Existing customers may be eligible for a different rate.

If you are 24 or over, have a bank account and receive a regular annual income, we should be able to give you a decision while you wait.

To apply, or for an information pack, complete the coupon or call Goldfish personal loans today on:

0800 122 177

Goldfish™

I would like more information on Goldfish personal loans

94006/089N

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

Address

Postcode

Telephone no.

Please return in an envelope to: Goldfish personal loans, FREEPOST NT 1231, Newcastle upon Tyne X, NE85 1BR

Loans for businesses or business purposes are excluded. A number of conditions or restrictions may apply to certain loans. For more information, please visit our website at www.goldfishloans.co.uk or call 0800 122 177. Goldfish is a trading name of WFC Bank plc, an authorised institution under the Banking Act 1987 whose registered office is at North Street, Newcastle, Tyne and Wear NE1 3AF. For your security and to help us improve our service to you, we may record or review calls to and from our Call Centre.

Yeltsin's sacked PM enters race for the Kremlin

By Phil Reeves
in Moscow

BORIS YELTSIN yesterday carefully declined to give unqualified backing to Viktor Chernomyrdin as his successor, reviving the possibility that - wildly ambitious though this may seem - he still harbours ambitions of remaining in the Kremlin into the 21st century.

The president held back from publicly endorsing his former prime minister, who this weekend delivered Moscow's second political shock within a week by declaring that he intends to run for the presidency in 2000.

Although Mr Chernomyrdin, dismissed by Mr Yeltsin last Monday, claimed he had his former boss's blessing to enter the race, Kremlin aides were working hard behind the scenes to emphasise that Mr Yeltsin had yet to choose his favoured candidate. Mr Yeltsin had "not determined his position" on the ex-premier's decision to run, a senior source told the Interfax news agency. Nor, the source said, had the 67-year-old president made his mind up about a third term.

A third term would seem improbable, given Mr Yeltsin's erratic health and behaviour, and his advancing years. But he is famously unpredictable, and enjoys applying egg to the faces of his doctors and critics. He also cares about his place in history as the man who oversaw the birth (albeit still incomplete) of a new Russia from the ashes of the Soviet Union. Health allowing, if he and his inner circle - some of whom have fortunes at stake - conclude that no other acceptable

candidate has a chance of victory, he may yet seek to stay on.

Mr Chernomyrdin's declaration came as a surprise because, with more than two years to go, it is remarkably early in the game. The president's cool response is almost certainly also because he wants to see how his former colleague fares before committing himself.

Conventional wisdom has it that the burly former prime minister has about as much chance of victory as Mr Yeltsin has of winning Wimbledon. He is deemed to have the charisma of a tea-towel - and one soiled, to boot, by five years' service in an unpopular government.

But Russian politics have little to do with conventionality. What matters far more than the former prime minister's dreary persona is the support of the small élite who control much of the media, and whose private fortunes helped propel an unpopular Mr Yeltsin back into office in 1996.

Yesterday one of the leading king-makers, Boris Berezovsky, an oil and media tycoon, welcomed Mr Chernomyrdin's move, saying he viewed it "absolutely positively". The Kremlin's backing, even if covert, can help bamboozle the more pliable regions into lining up behind a candidate.

But equally important is the strength of the field. One likely combatant is the mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov. Like Mr Chernomyrdin, who has the backing of the mighty energy lobby, the mayor has plenty of money, powerful connections, and a strong foothold in the media. Unlike the ex-prime minister, he is a sparkling performer, no de-

mocrat, but with a convincing popular touch. To the consternation of some in the West, his market credentials are decidedly shaky. If he decides to run, it will deepen the risk of splitting the anti-Communist vote - a prospect that will be preoccupying the king-makers. What fabulous price could Mr Luzhkov now ask in order to stay out?

Mr Chernomyrdin's 35-year-old replacement, Sergei Kiriyenko, is facing a more pressing issue. The Communists, who dominate the State Duma (lower house), intend to oppose confirming him in his post. A long bartering process between parliament and the Kremlin is about to begin.



Marque of respect: Vintage Porsches parked on the esplanade of the Cinquantenaire Arch in Brussels during the first rally of the year for Belgian owners. The event was arranged before the death on Friday of Ferdinand Porsche, founder of the world famous car company. Photograph: AP

Ugandans make palace fit for king

KAMPALA (AP) — Slashing trees, burning grass, and hauling debris, some 40,000 Ugandan royalists are working to prepare the hilltop palace for the return of the king of Buganda.

The palace at Lubiri, just west of Kampala, was once the pride of Buganda with its high walls, beautiful gardens and lake.

Before Ronald Muwenda Mutebi, a British-trained lawyer who is the king or "Kabaka" of Uganda's largest tribe, can repossess the palace - which had been turned into a barracks - it needs a thorough scrubbing.

"I came here to join the others in cleaning up the palace," Rovinsa Namusoke, 54, said. "It

looks like a cave. We must clean it for our lord."

Military experts have sealed off suspected minefields around the palace for clearing but royalists complain they are short of money to restore glory to the palace. By tradition, the king is forbidden to enter the palace until he has been anointed by witch doctors, healers and soothsayers.

King Mutebi generally spends his time raising money to help street children and advising on planting trees. But after 1993, when President Yoweri Museveni restored monarchies that had been abolished in the Sixties, Mutebi found himself in the role of the Kabaka.

Hidden eyes keep domestic life on the straight and narrow

By Stephen Vines
in Hong Kong

TROUBLE with the servants? Worried they are eating you out of house and home, stealing and idling? A Hong Kong company called Welpro Security may have the answer.

It has developed a hi-tech surveillance system called "Secure Look" which monitors homes with tiny cameras embedded in ceilings, furniture and anywhere else. The cameras record the comings and goings of domestic servants on video tapes, but really anxious employers can access this material by computer while they are out of the house through a telephone-computer linked system.

Servants are a big issue in Hong Kong. A small army of more than 100,000 imported domestic workers beaver away in the former colony's households. Most come from the Philippines and work on short-term contracts.

The day of the Chinese family retainers, known as "amahs", has passed away, forcing middle class families to bring unknown foreigners

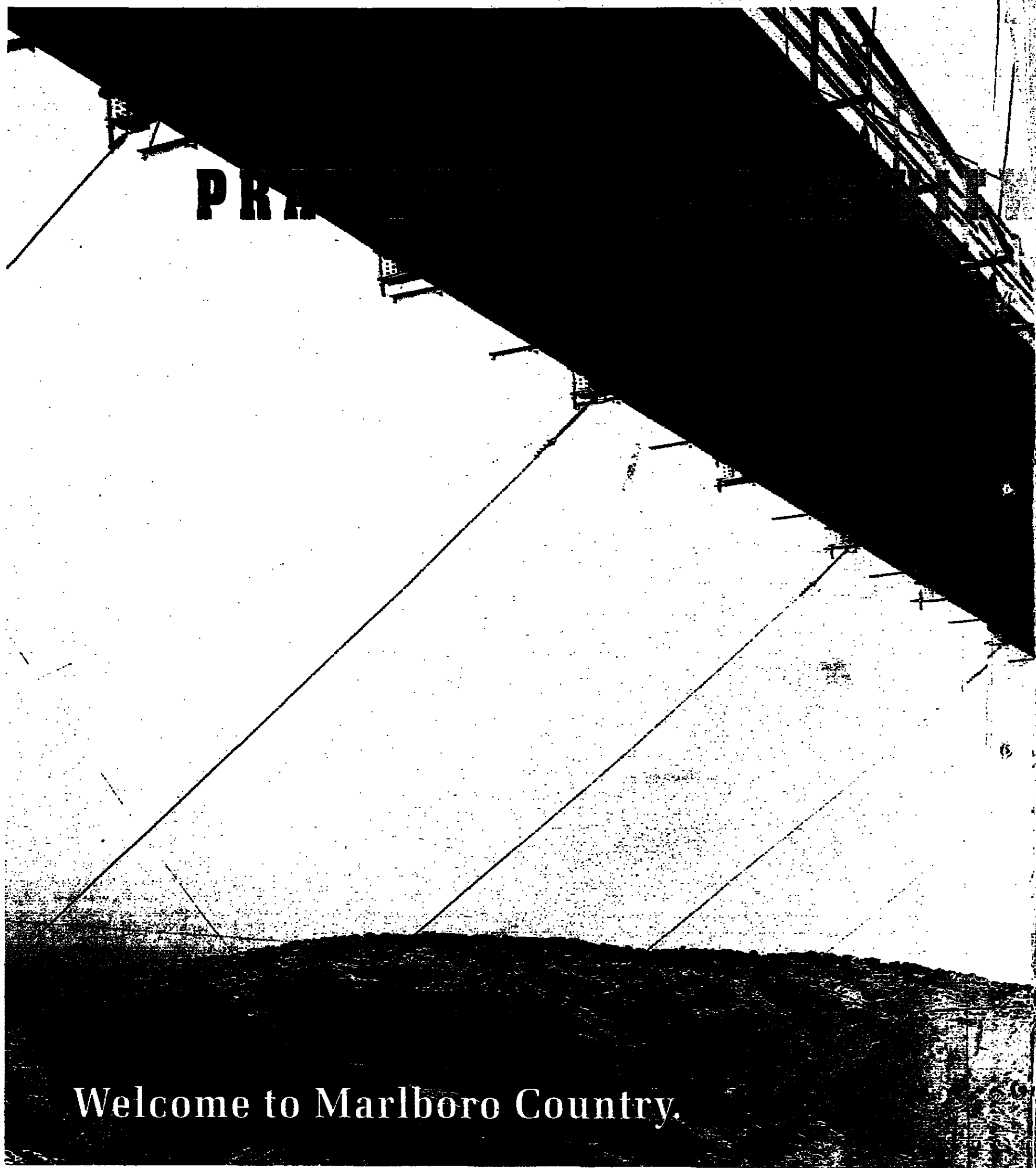
into their homes. Even families of fairly modest means often find it worthwhile to employ a full-time domestic worker for about £300 per month, plus board and lodging. Their presence explains why so many Hong Kong women have been free to join the labour force.

But there is much mistrust between employers and their staff.

Hong Kong even has an association dedicated to backing the rights of employers and campaigning for the minimum statutory wage to be kept down and even easier terms for dismissal and deportation.

The numbers of domestic workers coming into Hong Kong reached an all time high last year when 45,327 employment visas were issued. The recent recession has caused some lay offs.

The only problem with the new surveillance system is that its use is almost certainly a breach of Hong Kong's privacy laws. And these laws are about to be beefed up, which would make covert filming of people in their homes a criminal offence.



Welcome to Marlboro Country.

SMOKING CAU

Marlboro King Size
12 mg Tar 0.9 mg Nicotine

Chief Medical O
Mrlb
9 mg

SPY 100 1520

Rock fanfare for Versace

NEW YORK (AP) — With its requisite celebrity-studded audience and blaring rock music, the house of Versace unveiled its latest collection at the weekend as New York's fashion week began with a flourish.

It was the first New York showing of the line since the principal designer Gianni Versace was shot dead last July.

The invitation-only crowd of 700 included film director Woody Allen and his wife, Soon-Yi Previn, actress Elizabeth Hurley, and singers Sheryl Crow and K.D. Lang. The clothes on show were designed by Versace's sister, Donatella.

The men's line was made primarily of black fabrics, from high-buttoned jackets to leather pants. For the women, there were silver flapper dresses and leggings draped with narrow-cut skirts.



Show time: Woody Allen tries to block out the music at the Versace fashion show, flanked by his wife Soon-Yi Previn and Santo Versace. Photograph: AP

Race row threatens Springbok survival

By Mary Braid
in Cape Town

THE NEW South Africa's patience with the country's rugby bosses has snapped. The country's National Sports Council has given the South African Rugby Football Union (Safu) executive — and its chief, Louis Luyt — 14 days to resign or face a ban on international matches and a loss of the famous Springbok emblem.

Bitterness between rugby officials and Nelson Mandela's government has been building for months, but Mr Mandela's humiliation two weeks ago by Mr Luyt was the final straw.

Contesting the government's right to launch an inquiry into mismanagement and racism, Mr Luyt asked a Pretoria High Court judge to summon President Mandela for cross-examination on how he reached his decision.

Bishop Desmond Tutu said he was so angry at the indignities rugby's bosses had heaped on President Mandela by forcing him into court that although he was an avid rugby fan, he may stop watching the game.

In court, President Mandela contested Safu's claim that as a private organisation it should be free from political interference. He said he had staked his political future on promoting "the game of the enemy" after he was released from his 27-year incarceration. He said rugby, which is afforded quasi-religious status by Afrikaners — was a legitimate government concern.

The current bitterness is light years away from the early days of Mr Mandela's presidency when it was thought rugby might play a key part in the nation's healing process by throwing off its racist reputation.

At the weekend, after a heated meeting in Pretoria, the Sports Council gave its resignation ultimatum. It wants to appoint an interim committee to run rugby's affairs. Safu was quick to reject the council's demands, and it now remains to

be seen if the council will now go ahead with its threat to cancel all tours to South Africa by international rugby sides, suspend Safu's membership of the council and withdrawn permission to use the springbok emblem.

The Sports Council claims it holds the rights to the emblem. After Mr Mandela's government came to power in 1994, all other sporting bodies traded the springbok — for most South Africans a symbol of the apartheid days — for the protea, the national flower. It was Mr Mandela who resisted calls for the adoption of a new emblem for rugby, despite the fact that the springbok insignia was consid-



Badge of oppression — the springbok emblem

ered so racially inflammatory. The council's threats could return South Africa rugby to the international isolation it suffered during apartheid.

The Sports Council has also considered a call to freeze all Safu's assets and the launch of a mass action campaign, backed by unions and churches, to force rugby to toe the line. These drastic steps have been not been put into effect immediately only because some council members said they feared such action could destroy the sport entirely.

"We don't want to kill rugby," said sports council president Muleki George. "If we withdraw the springbok emblem now and boycott international tours, the game will not survive".

Peruvian plane crash kills 15

A Peruvian air force plane evacuating people stranded by floods crashed into a shantytown in the northern city of Piura yesterday. Local media said at least 15 people were killed. The director of a local hospital said 28 people had been rescued. The Russian-made plane was believed to be carrying at least 40 people. — AP, Lima

Malaysia steps up expulsions

Malaysia says it will speed up efforts to repatriate more than 8,000 illegal immigrants to Indonesia, following clashes in local detention camps. Last week riots broke out at three of the country's detention camps. The worst was at Semenyih, south of the capital city of Kuala Lumpur. Official reports said eight Indonesian illegal immigrants and one Malaysian police officer were killed. — AP, Kuala Lumpur

Royal start to Hajj

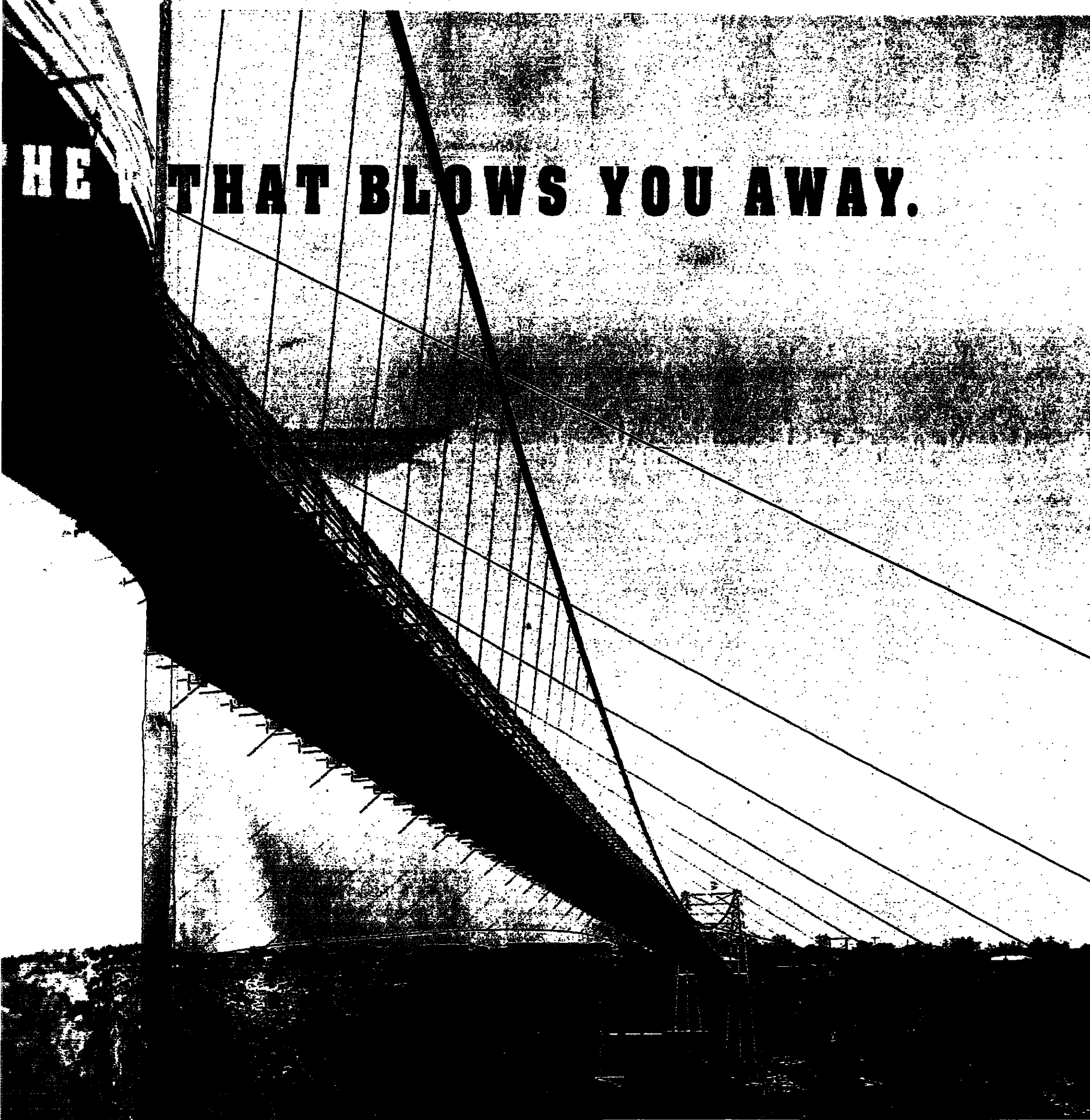
A leading member of the Saudi ruling family led the ritual washing of the Kaaba, the ancient stone structure in Mecca that is sacred to Muslims, the official Saudi Press Agency reported. Prince Majed, Governor of Mecca, who is a brother of King Fahd, performed the ceremony on behalf of the Saudi monarch. The Kaaba — a cube-shaped structure attributed to the Prophet Abraham — is washed twice a year with perfumed water. The ritual is usually carried out by King Fahd, but he has not been well since suffering a stroke in November 1995. — AP, Jiddah

El Niño kills sea lions

Thousands of starving sea lions have been washed ashore to die on beaches in Peru, because El Niño has driven away the fish they eat. Of the 180,000 sea lions that lived on Peru's Pacific coast before El Niño arrived late last year, 30,000 remain, say biologists. "Most of the dead sea lions we have found are adult females. This means that for this El Niño the probability of the population recovering rapidly is much lower," she said. — AP, San Juan

Chinese bone up on writing

Chinese archaeologists have dug up 3,500-year-old sheep bones bearing the oldest known examples of Chinese writing, the official Xinhua news agency reported yesterday. Eight inscriptions were carved crudely and deeply into two bones found in a pit at a sacrificial site in China's eastern Shandong province, Xinhua said. Experts recognised only two of the primitive characters — one meaning "six" and the other "divination". The earliest bone inscriptions previously found — in central Henan province — dated back 3,200 years to the late Shang Dynasty, Xinhua said. — Reuters, Peking



KING OF CANCER

Warning
medium
Nicotine

Marlboro Lights
6 mg Tar 0.5 mg Nicotine

Following in Eve's footsteps

Juliet Sanders on the battle to preserve the world's oldest footprints, as they come under increasing threat from curious tourists

IN THE West Coast National Park in South Africa, about 100km north of Cape Town, are three footprints. At a glance, they look quite ordinary in size and shape, like those made by any modern woman walking through soft sand. The difference is that these are embedded – fossilised – in the rock. In fact, they were made 117,000 years ago and are the oldest human footprints ever discovered.

They were found in 1995, by geologist David Roberts. But he held off announcing the discovery, despite its momentous importance, until last year. Even then it was too soon. Now scientists are worried about how many more years these footprints will last, for while they have survived everything nature has thrown at them, tourist interest is literally wiping them away.

The three prints are believed to have been made by a woman, 5ft 3in (1.6m) tall, strolling barefoot in wet sand after a rainstorm. The big toe, ball, arch and heel of the foot are well-defined, making the footprints – which were eventually fossilised – an important clue to understanding when anatomically modern humans emerged.

Roberts found the footprints in September 1995 after uncovering an ancient stone core, the flakes of which were used by early man for scouring and other tasks. "On a hunch" he went looking for traces of its maker. "I scrambled up and down these rock faces for hours finding absolutely nothing," he said on announcing the discovery last year. "Then I looked down and found that footprint there. The chances of finding something like this are a million to one."

Once the prints were made, they were covered very quickly with windblown sand on a slope that eventually turned to sandstone after being buried under pressure for tens of thousands of years. "They had to be buried for a very long time to turn to rock," said Roberts. Set on a pristine lagoon beach, the sandstone rock in which the footprints are embedded is so fragile that it crumbles quite easily. Even running one's hand over the surface causes fine grains of sand to come away.

What is so exciting about the footprints? Theory suggests that all human life – well before the emergence of *Homo sapiens* – is descended from one common female

ancestor, known as "genetic Eve". We do not know whether the prints are hers (the chances of that are incalculably small). But experts say they were made at the right time and place to fit her profile.

"What we do know from other sites in South Africa is that there were anatomically modern humans living here. It's like putting together the pieces of a puzzle," says Janette Deacon, an archaeologist at South Africa's National Monuments Council.

Ms Deacon has noticed growing interest in the site from people who want to share something – anything – with this woman from so long ago. "There's been no tailing off of interest in the site. That's exciting, because it's engendering in people a sense of history."

But the public's fascination with their cultural heritage has become a threat to the footprint trail. In fact, it has ruled out scientists' hopes of preserving them in situ. The effects of the visiting hordes who have beaten a path to see this older trail are clearly visible. There is already graffiti dotting the rocks around the footprints. People visiting the site have been spotted clambering on to the brittle dune rock to stand inside the footprints – prompting fears that if left unchecked, irreparable damage will result.

Conservationists want to keep those people away. But their case is not helped by the fact that the footprints are on a popular beach in a picturesque national park where last Christmas the visitors were arriving in about 200 cars a day. Large numbers are expected this Easter, so no chances are being taken. Guards are already on site to patrol the area and prevent further damage. A transparent Perspex screen will soon also be suspended over the footprints to prevent people putting their feet in them.

The weather is another foe, and one that cannot be controlled. The rock has already slipped slightly from its original position through a combination of wind and wave action, according to Craig Morkel of Corporate Image, one of the organisations involved in the talks about the future of the footprints. "In the long term, the wind and wave action below will undercut that rock and it will slide into the water,"



In the beginning: Was 'genetic' Eve responsible for the marks? Lucas Granach's Adam and Eve (above)

Photograph: Reuters

Morkel adds. "It is sad for all of us, but removal has been reluctantly accepted. We understand and accept it now."

Ms Deacon agrees that any damage could not be repaired. "There is no way the footprints are going to remain undamaged there," she says. "The rock beneath the surface is very soft and fragile, and if you don't look after it you could end up with just a pile of sand."

Scientists, conservationists and others interested in preserving the footprints have banded together and decided they must be moved temporarily to the South African Museum in Cape Town – if it can be done safely. A host of special-

ists have been consulted over the best way to move the rock prints, including Briton Keith Taylor, an expert in stone conservation, who has

the West Coast National Park have bowed to necessity. "Unfortunately, we have to go for second prize at this stage," says the park's warden,

footprint trail. "There is a need by modern man to find his roots and his origins. This could be a tremendous draw."

The park plans to build a visitors' site that will measure up to international standards, and then it will attempt to claim back the footprints. "We will try to soften the blow by putting a very good replica in its place and, hopefully, at some time stage we will be able to return the original," says Mr von Kaschkepark.

But this still underlines the troubling question: how do we look after the interests of the past without cutting it off from the present?

Visitors have been spotted clambering on to the brittle dune rock to stand inside the footprints, prompting fears about damage

agreed to inspect the site during a visit to the country in May. Meanwhile, the authorities at

Otto von Kaschkepark. As the millennium approaches, he anticipates continuing interest in the

THEORETICALLY...

Ever get the feeling you're being watched? The one-metre-resolution space imagery already used by high-specification military satellites is now available to us all. Space Imaging, of Colorado, is launching a commercial high-resolution satellite in the Athena II rocket. Once the IKONOS 1 satellite is in place, customers will be able to order high-resolution pictures of anywhere in the world. Meanwhile, you can order similar images from a company closer to home. GeoInformation International has digital aerial maps of more than 75 cities around the world, available to customers on CD-Rom. The whole of central London is stored in 7GB of data, at a cost of £5,000.

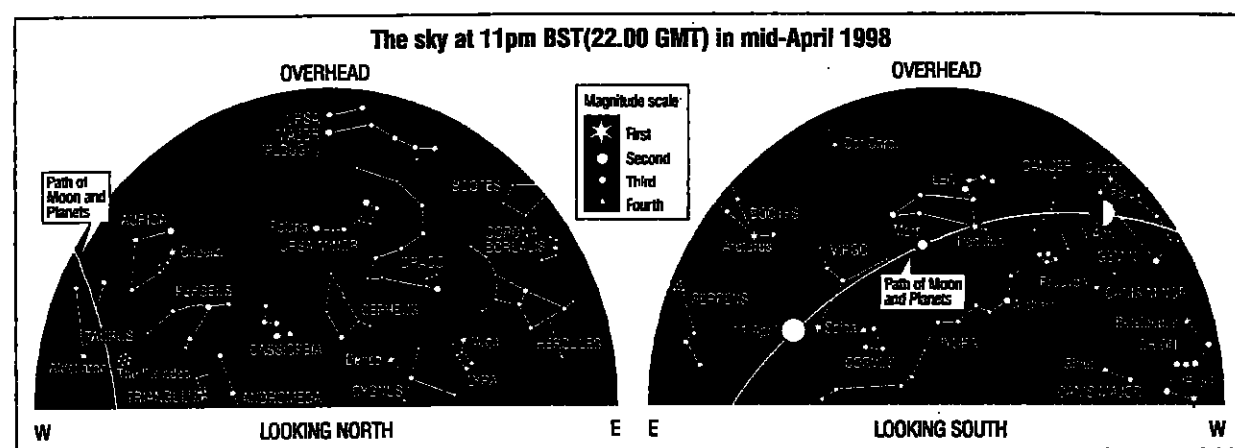
Several frog species have become extinct recently and others are showing alarming rates of deformity. No single cause has been identified, but the first field experiment under natural conditions have confirmed that ambient levels of ultraviolet-B (UV-B) radiation from the sun can cause high rates of amphibian mortality and deformity. According to the proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Joseph N. Kiesecker compared the embryos of long-toed salamanders, which were shielded from UV-B radiation by mylar filters, with unshielded embryos. He found that 95 per cent of the shielded embryos hatched, compared with only 14.5 per cent of the unshielded embryos. Of the surviving salamanders, 0.5 per cent of those shielded were deformed, compared with 91.9 per cent of those unshielded. Higher levels of an enzyme called photolyase may protect some species.

Earthquakes along the San Andreas fault, north-east of Los Angeles, have occurred more regularly than previously thought and the next big one could come sooner than supposed, says geologist Mark T. Brandon. Using his knowledge of lichens to pinpoint the dates of previously unknown ancient earthquakes, a new method called "lichenometry", he found signs of earthquakes larger than magnitude 7, which generated numerous rock avalanches as far as 400km from the epicentre. Soon after the quakes, spongy lichens began to colonise the fresh rock surfaces. Because of their predictable growth rate, lichens make it possible to estimate within 10 and 20 years when an earthquake occurred in the past thousand years. The method was used to identify a major unknown quake near Los Angeles in 1690 and several earthquakes in New Zealand over the past 700 years.

The number of people infected with internal parasites such as tapeworms is soaring – and tourism is being blamed. With more people travelling to Eastern Europe, an area of high infection, the frequency with which people are affected is rising fast. Eating undercooked beef, pork or fish is the main way you can acquire the beastie, which can grow up to 30ft long. Eggs develop into larvae and live in the small intestine. Although an infected person can suffer weight loss and stomach pains, there may be no symptoms. The only sign of infection may be individual white segments of tapeworm emerging from your rectum – dead or alive. If it is not treated, the patient may develop cysticercosis – a disease in which the tapeworm larvae invade the brain, causing serious mental disturbance.

Scientists from Leicester University are using techniques for studying stars and distant galaxies in the battle against cancer. Detectors normally used to record X-ray emission from space are now being developed for the analysis of human tissue. Scientists in the department of physics and astronomy believe the new detector could make an impact in the investigation of cancer-treating drugs, such as tamoxifen, commonly given as a treatment to women with breast cancer.

THE STARS THIS MONTH



WHILE YOU were sleeping last night, a radio dish 140ft (42m) in diameter, set in the wilds of West Virginia, was busy scanning the sky for signs of alien life. Panning from selected star to selected star, the telescope lingered on each one for just a few minutes – long enough to listen for any tell-tale artificial radio signals emanating from the star's circling planets.

This privately funded search, called Project Phoenix, has been going on for nearly five years. It arose out of the ashes of a NASA-funded project, axed by the US Congress after only one year in 1993 because, as one senator put it, "not one Martian has said 'take me to your leader'". An editorial in the *Boston Globe* wryly commented: "This only goes to prove that there is no intelligent life in Washington."

Many astronomers are cer-

tain there is intelligent life out there. The Sun is an ordinary star with planets and other stars have planets, too. There are 200bn stars in our galaxy alone, and the chemical elements that make up life are among the most common in the Universe.

For 40 years, a dedicated band of astronomers has been on the trail of ET. Working from the premise that all technologically driven civilisations will go through a phase of communicating by radio waves – they are fast, cheap and penetrating – the researchers have been building receivers of increasing complexity to pin down civilisations. Soon, the SETI researchers hope to pick up a signal. The effects will send shockwaves around our planet. Knowing we are not alone in space will put a different perspective on everything. We must also decide whether

to reply – an act some believe would be extreme stupidity. Anthropologist Jared Diamond begs radio astronomers tempted to send a reply to switch off their transmitters. He fears the aliens will track us down and do, in his words "what every superior civilisation has done to lesser civilisations throughout history", subjugate and eventually exterminate them.

But the SETI researchers believe that a dialogue with a more advanced race could be enormously beneficial to us. But who should reply on behalf of all humankind? And what should the message say?

Time is running out for SETI. Increasing radio interference from our electronic society is drowning out the faint murmurings crossing light years of space. Ultimately, the SETI astronomers are asking to

be allocated a crater on the far side of the Moon.

What if we never pick up a signal? Then we might have to face the fact that we are alone. Then we would be responsible not just for one small planet – but for an entire Universe.

The night sky in April
It's a pretty poor month for planets. None are visible in the evening sky; in the early morning you'll catch brilliant Venus low in the twilight glow, rising little more than an hour before the Sun. Lower still is the second brightest planet, Jupiter. The two planets are usually converging, passing closest to one another on the morning of 23 April, when they form a spectacular trio with the thin crescent moon. April diary (all times 24-hour, BST)
1st: 2324 Full Moon
19th: 2053 Moon at Last Quarter
22nd: 1500 (approx) Maximum of Lyrids meteor shower – 10 meteors/hr
26th: 24th New Moon

Heather Couper
and Nigel Henbest

TELL ME ABOUT ... Catastrophism

BEFORE 1830, everyone was a catastrophist. The theory that most of the features in the Earth were produced by sudden, short-lived, worldwide events, tied in perfectly with the Christian fundamentalism that dominated thinking in the West.

Christians knew that the Earth had a turbulent history, including a planet-wide flood. Awkwardnesses, such as dinosaur fossils and seashells on lofty mountain peaks could be neatly explained away by reference to divine intervention in the geological record.

Then the Scottish geologist Charles Lyell came up with a radical theory, expounded in *The Principles of Geology*, published in 1830. Lyell said that the Earth's crust had been subjected not to a series of divine catastrophes, but instead to a slow and unending process of change and renewal.

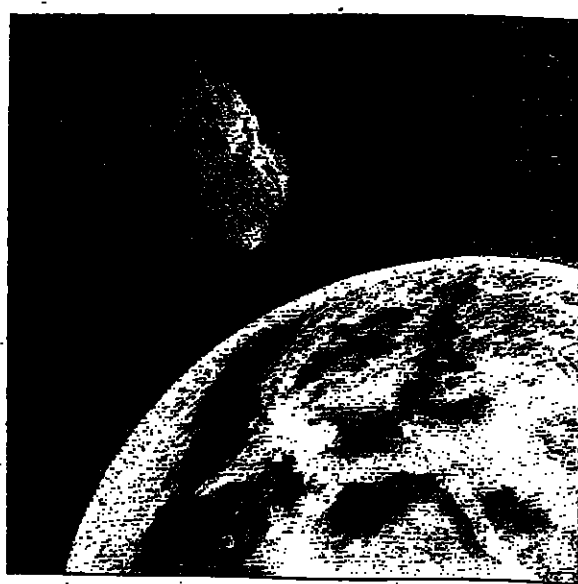
The rivers wear the mountains away to dust. This dust is compacted into sediments, which eventually sink into the mantle, melt, and are thrust up again as new mountains. Then the whole process begins again: "We find no vestige of a

beginning, no prospect of an end," he wrote.

This idea – which came to be known as Uniformitarianism – dominated geology for 150 years. It seemed to tie in perfectly with Darwin's ideas of evolution by natural selection, which had no reliance on divine intervention. By the 1970s, Catastrophism, with its fundamentalist overtones, was pronounced as dead and buried as a slab of Jurassic limestone.

But there was a problem. At the end of the Cretaceous, some 65m years ago, the dinosaurs, the great marine reptiles, the flying pterosaurs and many other species all vanished, apparently in the space of a few centuries or less. Other mass extinctions had happened before in Earth's history. How could these sudden and dramatic events be explained in terms of Lyell's timeless concept of gradual change?

In 1980, father-and-son geologist team Walter and Luis Alvarez claimed that the end of the Cretaceous was marked by a thin clay layer rich in iridium. This layer was found in places as far apart as Denmark and New Zealand, implying a planet-wide origin.



Doomsday: coming to a planet near you

The two geologists proposed that the Cretaceous extinctions had been caused by the impact of a six-mile-wide asteroid, which scattered iridium-rich dust throughout the atmosphere. Then in 1990, a 180km-wide impact crater was discovered in Mexico's Yucatan peninsula. The crater was of the right age and the right size to fit in with the Alvarez hypothesis. After its death some 160 years before, Catastrophism was reborn as Neo-Catastrophism.

shorn of its religious connotations. Many geologists now believe that Earth's history – including the history of life – has been profoundly influenced by cosmic impacts. We have no idea when the next impact will occur – earlier this month scientists thought for a few hours that an asteroid was on its way in just 30 years' time – but if something the size of the dinosaur-killer hits us, then arguing about geology will be the least of our worries. Michael Hanton

Louise Jury talks to author Judi James as we begin her guide to the perils of passion in the workplace

Queen of the jungle



Judi James: You should keep your animal instincts under control if you want to have a successful career, she says

Photograph: Andrew Buirman



SEX AT WORK

JUDI JAMES says don't do it. Sex in the office is a big, big mistake. Anyone on the fast track to success must know that passion and promotion don't mix. "If you are truly career-minded and that is your sole goal, it is better to leave it out," she says. "A good career needs planning, and it will become unstable if sex gets in the way. You lose a certain amount of control."

But for the rest of us, Judi is more realistic. She acknowledges that thousands may be tempted at some point by Brian or Brenda in accounts, so she simply offers a few words of advice. In her new book, *Sex at Work, A Survival Guide*, Judi says think twice, count to 10, and try to look several steps ahead. Oh yes, and avoid the temptation to do anything incriminating on the photocopier.

"Too many people say, 'I wish I had thought about it beforehand'," she says. It's all very well claiming you'll be adults about it. But nobody is an adult in relationships, we're all childish. One of the greatest lies of our time is, 'If we break up, it won't affect our working relationship'."

Judi advocates cold rationality before making a move. "Fancying someone you

work with is not a criminal offence – neither is asking them out." But, she warns, consider the consequences first. "Yes, I know you're only going to ask him/her down the pub, not down the aisle, but it's always best to study every angle of a situation before taking the plunge."

Her advice on sex in the office comes not from experience of photocopyers and coffee machines. She has never worked in an office in her life, although she suffered from serious sexual harassment – which was then par for the course – when she worked as a model in the Seventies. "It was that type of era. We got used to fighting men off at photographic sessions, and we didn't really realise it wasn't acceptable," she says.

But for the last 15 years, five days a week, she has been running training courses for business and industry on public image and on office behaviour. In between writing racy bonkbuster novels, she has written books including *Body Talk – The Skills of Positive Image* and *The Office Jungle*. And the need for guidance is such that it is the Industrial Society, a training and advisory organisation which campaigns to improve life at work, which is publishing the new guide.

With a touch of humour, *Sex at Work* addresses sex on two fronts – the office relationship, illicit or otherwise, and the more serious question of sexual harassment. In the words of the blurb, it is a "timely guide for all those who need to negotiate the minefield between gentle flirtation and blatant sexual harassment". Judi presents rules for surviving the office party, outlines the perils of getting caught in a compromising position on the security camera and clues on spotting a colleague porn surfing on the Internet.

"Probably up until about five years ago,

I wouldn't have wanted to touch such a book with a broom pole," Judi says. "Industry went through a terribly politically correct era when even looking at somebody's ankles was a hanging offence. You couldn't have written anything with any humour attached. But now people have got their sense of humour back. A lot of company policies and general culture are more relaxed."

Yet the serious side of the office is manifest in the newspaper headlines. Cases of sexual harassment continue to end up at industrial tribunals and the failed office affair still has the capacity to cause frosty

sired last October may become a nightmare by March. "It's horribly, horribly, horribly serious when it goes wrong," she says. "People need to work as a team in offices and partnerships upset the balance anyway. Even if you take sex out of the situation, people are bad at working together."

Some careers still discourage relationships, either in or outside the office, Judi says. The City and the law are, in general, less open-minded than media companies, for instance. Yet employers who ignore the possibility of passion are fooling themselves. Work is still where many people first set eyes on their future partner. It is estimated that

A lot of it comes down to common sense, she says, but people should be made aware when they are causing offence. And, increasingly, men are as likely to be the victims as women – even though they do not always admit it. "Guys say, 'I should be so lucky,' but they're envisaging a beautiful female boss who asks them to strip off," Judi says. "A lot of situations that were described to me by men were stories that women would perceive as sexual harassment."

For a woman with some stern advice, Judi James is remarkably warm and open. She has a broad smile and a ready laugh. With long blonde hair and long slim legs, she is probably accustomed to a certain amount of attention.

In essence, she claims she doesn't want to stop people having fun and seems relieved that the office affair is still alive and kicking. She is keen to strike a balance. "Some things are more important than work," she says. Ambition regardless, she suspects she would have fallen foul of her own advice given half an opportunity. "If I'd ever worked in an office, I would have been there, done that, bought the T-shirt. I'm probably one of the least sensible people I know."

But you only have to look at a few high-profile cases to realise the wisdom of ensuring your sexual signals are not misread. Judi muses on the allegations besieging US President. "I'd love to know whether Bill Clinton would be in this position now if somebody had said something to him," she says. "Maybe I should send him a copy of the book."

Sex at Work: A Survival Guide by Judi James is available in bookshops from 3 April, price £8.99, or call 0121 410 3040. Tomorrow: bosom-brushing, thigh patting, huggy greetings: your guide to what is and what isn't harassment.

'People need to work as a team in offices – and partnerships upset the balance. Even if you take sex out of the situation, people are bad at working together'



relations. "It's like that advert," Judi says, having spoken to hundreds of workers about harassment in the course of her research. "I've never done it, but I know a man who does."

Judi has found some male managers terrified to be left alone in their office with a woman member of staff for fear of a sexual harassment claim. "If they've got a good career with a marriage and wife and family, they fear they could lose everything," she says.

And even a relationship that was de-

up to half of couples meet at the office. Judi simply wants to stop the mistakes.

On the question of sexual harassment, however, she takes a more serious line. Fifteen per cent of men and 54 per cent of working women admit to having experienced sexual harassment. This is where she hopes employers, as well as employees will take note of the book. "If there is a message, it is that employers need to iron out a good policy on sexual harassment so that managers know what to do and so the employees know what their rights are."

up



From April fools to Spiceworld ... a quirky look at the week ahead

Mind the spaghetti

On Wednesday, budding Jeremy Beadles will be grinning from ear to ear: it's 1 April. The BBC, with its history of fooling listeners and viewers, is the one to watch out for. Richard Dimbleby's 1957 introduction of a film purporting to show spaghetti growing on trees in Switzerland is probably the most celebrated April fool. In 1995 Radio 4's *Today* programme duped listeners with a ruse about a water diver in a Devonshire village who could predict the winning lottery numbers.

Mad dog

Also on Wednesday, political pooches will be strutting their stuff in Westminster – but the Westminster Dog of the Year competition is no fool. For the likes of Herbie, a miniature wire haired dachshund, it is serious business. Owned by Ian Taylor, MP for Esher and Walton, Herbie was a contender last year but lost out in the final round to Vom, a Collie-cross owned by former Treasury minister Phillip Oppenheim. Herbie was most affronted at not winning and had to be coaxed into entering again but this year he is considered a hot tip. The favourite for this week's competition is the impressive Irish Wolfhound which can be seen taking Helen Southworth, Labour MP for Warrington South, for walks in St James Park. Findbar, or Fin, weighs in at a massive 10 stone and is 33 inches at the shoulder. He should be have little problem seeing off Buster, the Staffordshire bull terrier owned by Roy Hattersley, which attacked a greylag goose in the same London park.



Own goals

There's no messing with football agent Rachel Anderson, either, when it comes to negotiating the fees for the players she represents, but there may be some foolish expressions at the HQ of the Professional Footballers Association. There will be three notable absences from the annual PFA awards on Sunday: the aforementioned Ms Anderson, Sports Minister Tony Banks and Football Association chief Graham Kelly. The PFA have told Ms Anderson she cannot attend because the event is "men only", so Mr Banks and Mr Kelly are boycotting the Grosvenor House Hotel bash in protest. For the record, David Beckham of Manchester Utd and Michael Owen of Liverpool are tipped to win the Players' Player of the Year and the Young Player of the Year respectively.

Scotty Spice

It's a good week for David Beckham's beloved, Posh Spice – Victoria Adams, as well. The Spice Girls kick off the UK leg of their Spiceworld tour in Glasgow on Saturday. Their first tour has already taken them from Zurich to Dortmund but back in Britain their latest tune is languishing at number four in the charts – "Stop" was the first Spice single not to go straight in at number one. But with all the UK dates sold out within hours of going on sale, and each Spice expecting to make £5m from the 30 nation tour, things can't be that bad.

— Michael Greenwood

The joys of a free-range childhood – alcopops and pollution



DINAH HALL

I SHALL have to give up reading the Sunday papers: they are definitely bad for my anxiety gene. Yesterday we were invited to worry – again – about children and lead: apparently they have found high levels of it in delinquent teenagers (I suspect they also found high levels of testosterone as well, but that wasn't mentioned). Is the answer, then, to keep children at home away from traffic pollution? Ah, no, then we'll just be adding to the problems of "battery-reared" children – subject of another alarmist ar-

ticle in a different newspaper. I find the idea of a kind of golden era when children played out in the street quite mystifying. I mean, what's so great about dodging the dog shit on the pavement, when there's probably a virtual reality version of it on Playstation? Looking back to my own childhood, I suppose I was a free-range kid who elected for a battery coop. My only memory of playing in the street was sitting on the front garden wall licking my lips and pretending to be Kathy Kirby's cousin (remember Kathy Kir-

by of *Secret Love* fame? That was some lip gloss). The rest of the time I was in the back garden looking for fairies and trying to fly. The benefits of playing out in the street, according to this article, are largely to do with socialisation – the very reason I, as a child, avoided it. Around here, of course, parents don't let their children play on the streets because there is a general perception that the ones who do are also allowed to go free-range amongst the 18-plus videos, alcopops, and car ignitions. Which, I suppose,

brings us full circle back to the lead.

I ALLOWED my own brood out of their coop on Friday for the annual torture that is the school disco. My eight-year-old spent the last one in tears – and so, consequently did I – because she was too inhibited to join in the Spice Girl dance. I realised it was all my fault – probably because I don't allow her to play outside on the streets, but largely because I had subliminally dressed her as a miniature version of me in baggy linen shorts and baggy

shirts. (Remember how sorry you felt at school for the children of older mothers because they always dressed them in home-made cardigans and ankle socks? I'm probably doing the Nineties equivalent of that to my children). So this time she went as a junior version of Posh Spice, but still ended up in tears: everybody else was All Saints. The five-year-old was too shy to dance (genes again) until the class competition at which she raced on stage and transformed in to Lolita-meets-whirling-dervish. I was too shocked to be pleased

that she had won the prize, particularly as other parents presumed she had learned her dancing technique from me in my alternative career as glamorous dancer in a topless club. I recovered just in time to see the year six competition, and my son, the only boy dancing in the whole class – throwing himself about like Michael Jackson on speed. Obviously we have a very strong competitive gene in the family because, having skulked in a corner all night with a bag of crisps, he went out there to win, swiping the prize from under

the nose of the girl-vamps doing the Macarena behind him. The school disco is a rite of passage for year six girls – last year's class ended up slow-dancing together, so this year's had unrealistic expectations of the boys metamorphosing from would-be Ronaldos in to Romeos. For weeks, they had spent break-times pairing each other off and stalking their potential conquests; consequently, on the night of the disco only three boys, possibly the most hormonally challenged in the class, turned up. And one was only there for the crisps.

THE INDEPENDENT

EDITOR: ROSIE BOYCOTT; EDITOR IN CHIEF: ANDREW MARR
DEPUTY EDITOR: CHRIS BLACKHURST
ADDRESS: 1 CANADA SQUARE, CANARY WHARF, LONDON E14 5DL
TELEPHONE: 0171 293 2000 OR 0171 345 2000
FAX: 0171 293 2435 OR 0171 345 2435
THE INDEPENDENT ON THE INTERNET: WWW.INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A moral role on the world stage

WINSTON CHURCHILL left an awkward legacy to today's politicians. He turned the spirit of national self-preservation into the noblest of causes, the resistance to fascism, and he convinced us of our military prowess. Throughout the Cold War, the period of decolonisation and the adjustment to American power, the memory of Churchill has made straight thinking about Britain's place in the world difficult.

Two obsessions trail in his wake: one of Britain "punching above her weight", the other of the association of British foreign policy with morality. Tomorrow, as he rises to deliver the Winston Churchill lecture, George Robertson needs to face both obsessions squarely. It is said that Tony Blair intends to "rule the country by headline". And the headline on Mr Robertson's speech is: "No peace dividend."

But the smaller print is much more interesting than that. New Labour is beginning to feel its way towards a coherent foreign policy and defence posture. Ever since Robin Cook hung the millstone of an "ethical foreign policy" around the neck of a government that was only a matter of days old, Mr Blair must have regretted such an open invitation to critics. Now, however, Mr Robertson is beginning to use it to advantage.

The instinct to cut defence spending is strong and honourable, and it extends much further than the CND wing of the Labour Party. But Mr Robertson is seeking to set up against it the equally strong and honourable desire for Britain to play a moral role on the world stage. He wants to set out for Britain a mission as a kind of nuclear-tipped Sweden. If Britain has national competitive advantages in security matters, they are the professionalism of its armed forces and the global reach of its post-imperial interests.

Here, left and right can meet. For the left, tomorrow night's dismantling of the RAF's last nuclear bombs. For the right, the prospect of building two big aircraft carriers. Mr Blair's desire to play to the nationalistic gallery – such as his muscular advocacy of the Eurofighter project – can be reconciled with Clare Short's extraordinary ambition to end world poverty.

So, we welcome Mr Robertson's emphasis on Britain's role as a global peacekeeper, while recognising that this is not an ethical ambition that comes cheap. But what the proposers of the annual ritual motion at Labour conferences calling for defence spending to be reduced to the west European average need to recognise is that it has already been cut by more than a quarter in real terms since the recent peak in 1985.

The question is what should happen after the present standstill, which runs up to the end of the inherited spending plans in April 2000. Mr Robertson and Mr Blair seem to be signalling that the period of consolidation will continue.

There is a case for that. It is much easier to achieve a radical re-ordering of defence priorities within a static overall budget. The incentive for internal efficiency is greatly enhanced if mandarins or top brass know that any savings they make will be ploughed straight back into other parts of their empire.

However, we doubt whether Mr Robertson is being radical enough. He intends to cut the size of the British Army in Germany, which is there only to stop the Russian tanks from rolling across the Elbe. But he intends to cut, not pull out altogether, leaving thousands of personnel and tanks there, when the arguments for maintaining any sort of presence in Germany are weak.

One is that it ensures stability in central Europe, a stability threatened, for example, by the break-up of Yugoslavia. But the fact that British soldiers live in barracks in Bavaria had nothing to do with our peace-keeping capability (or lack of it) in Bosnia.

The other argument is that to withdraw entirely would encourage the Americans to go home, too, by reinforcing the strong Congressional sentiment that Europe's defence should be a matter for Europe's taxpayers. Well, if the only way we can persuade the United States to contribute to Nato's commitments in Europe is by pointlessly stationing thousands of soldiers on the territory of a fellow member of the European Union, then there is something wrong with our arguments.

Mr Robertson should recall that Churchill said many things that embarrass those who claim him for Little England about the contribution of a united Europe to the cause of peace. So, while Britain's ambition to keep peace throughout the world might be an expensive one, there is still some of the dividend from the end of the Cold War to be cashed in.

Vote of no-confidence

THE STRANGE Death of Conservative England: the story continues. Of all the shocking news from Harrogate at the weekend, perhaps the most compelling was the fact that only 115,000 Tory members voted in the ballot on party reforms. It is easy to mock. This was the party that long-boasted a million members. That long proclaimed itself the most successful election-winning machine in the democratic world. Now it has a smaller membership than Mr Blair's new-fangled party, which was only invented the other day, and only one member in three bothers to vote in a ballot on historic changes unthinkable 12 months ago – a turnout that would disgrace an inner-city council by-election.

But that is internal democracy for you: it reveals all kinds of unpleasant truths. Mr Hague's drive to create a one-member-one-vote party is absolutely right. But it has exposed the hollowiness at the heart of modern Toryism: there is no vision to enthuse the members and potential members. Perhaps it is too early for that, but until Mr Hague gives us something worth joining a party for, the Tories are condemned to irrelevance.



Artist Art Brenner clambering through *The Chevron Variations*, the UK's longest sculpture, at Blackpole Retail Park, Worcester.

Photograph: Christopher Jones

Child choices

FOR once the estimable Suzanne Moore (27 March) has strayed over the line from provocative comment into smug self-congratulation. She talks about the choices she had made in having two children as a single woman and knowing how tough it is.

To get to her position on the economic ladder, which is what has made her choice possible, both her brilliant talent and fantastic good luck are essential. For her then to suggest we do what Jodie Foster did and go and have artificial insemination is to add insult to injury. It's not the AID that makes Jodie exceptional, it's her wealth.

I know far too many women in the predicament she describes with such contempt to be able to accept her, for once, simplistic line of reasoning. They are bright, talented, hard-working women who do not whinge. And for the record, the proverbial Comran sofa features nowhere in any of these people's economies, most of whom, like myself, are one month's rent or mortgage away from destitution.

Am I really colluding with a backlash in hoping to have a child without losing my home, my pension, my bargaining power and every bit of independence I have fought for? With respect, Suzanne Moore never had to make that choice.
SUSANNAH PERRY
London E5

IT IS said that there are so many nice, capable unmarried women in their thirties who would like to marry and have children but who feel they may have missed the boat. The reason for this situation is far more complex than Suzanne Moore's simplistic, accusation analysis allows.

The feminists rightly persuaded women to be more career-minded and to achieve some financial independence. But there is more involved than career-mindedness. Social changes since the Seventies have had profound effects on the 18-39 age group that must be taken into account. My generation did not "shack

up" before marriage – let alone with the first person who came along. Young people could afford to share accommodation in city areas where there was a great deal of socialising because working hours allowed a decent balance between work and play. "Shacking up" takes people out of circulation at a time when they ought to be playing the field. High rents have forced many young people to stay on with their parents or to live in uncentral areas. This takes them out of circulation. And the macho business culture of excessively long working hours takes conscientious people out of circulation. DR ANNE-CAROLE CHAMBER
Ross and Cromarty, Scotland

I FIND it amazing that Suzanne Moore can take most of a page backing a single woman's right to have children, without once considering a child's right to have a father. It seems easier to me to argue for a child's right to two parents, than to support a woman's right to have a child without a partner, yet Suzanne Moore appears to place a woman's rights above those of a child's. I hope I have misinterpreted her position.
CHARLIE ROBERTSON
London N19

Deaths in prison

ALTON MANNING was killed by the brutal force used on him by seven men. It is quite preposterous for anyone to try to explain the death of Mr Manning and the other six black men who have died in custody by reference to a predisposition on their part to succumb to asphyxia ("Racist" prison chief is urged to quit", 27 March.)

In order to have found that Mr Manning was "unlawfully killed", the inquest jury would have had to

have been sure "beyond a reasonable doubt" that he had been killed in an incident of murder or manslaughter. That is exactly the same standard of proof as is required in criminal trial. This is remarkably convenient for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) whose official Code says that prosecutions will be brought where there is a "realistic prospect of conviction". They have, in the inquest jury's verdict, a ready-made test indicating that there is such a realistic prospect.

Thus, it is presumably just a matter of time before those who killed Mr Manning are prosecuted.
DR GARY SLAPPER
Open University, Milton Keynes

RICHARD TILT may have been either right or wrong in his assertion that "blacks suffocate more easily than whites". If he was wrong with mischievous intent, he deserves criticism. However, if he was either right or wrong with sincere intent after receiving faulty information, he should not be pilloried as a racist.

There are serious dangers in allowing the politically correct lobby to stifle genuine scientific debate if they do not like some of the possible outcomes of the debate. We must always insist that open factual discussion is protected from attempts to stifle it for the sake of political convenience.
SAM BOOTE
Keyworth, Nottingham

After Jonesboro

THE horror in Jonesboro will touch the hearts of most who hear of it. Please can it reach people's brains too? I am particularly struck that the children and teachers were trapped outside their building by a self-locking system. Around me, as I visit schools in my area, I have:

■ locked myself out of school whilst on playground duty;
■ let adults I do not recognise into after-school activities when they have tapped on the window for admittance;
■ noted that it takes an extra adult to hold a door open to admit adults they do not recognise to evening functions;

■ interrupted the secretary's work to gain admittance to schools.

At my children's school, this morning, I let myself in. I spoke to the secretary, too far from her office to be door keeper, and checked refreshments for a PTA function to raise money to support a poorly funded school. I wasted no one's time.

If there is money to spend in schools (and there is, because locks are in place) can we please spend it on reducing class sizes so that the world raises fewer disaffected loners? Locks will not stop this sort of person finding victims in a spectacular setting. Connecting with the social world may.
ANI HARRIS
New Mills, Derbyshire

THE saddest thing about the Arkansas shooting is that it will take a lot worse than that to persuade Americans that the right to carry arms against one's fellow citizens is a stupidity in any state, but an obscenity in a modern democracy.
K LEAMAN
London W9

Cook's tour

I HAVE just read your front-page article (27 March) about British Jews snubbing Robin Cook over his Israel visit. I do feel it is about time that some person in a position of influence puts Israel in its place and I am glad that Robin Cook had the wisdom to do it.

How can British Jews talk of peace when Israel persistently bullies Palestinians (with the world turning a blind eye) by infringing on the no-mans-land between the two countries, by building permanent settlements on it. If Israel was really interested in peace it would not be invoking problems, and it would be nice to see "leading British Jews" being a little more objective, and in so doing really support the peace initiative.
DERRICK SARGO
Edinburgh

Defence of the realm

LIKE Andrew Marr I was reminded of "Protect and Survive" (the government's helpful leaflet on how to survive a nuclear war) when I was reading about anthrax attacks from Iraq.

I was just contemplating how this scare could be turned into a policy when Paul Beaver of *Jane's Defence Weekly* suggested on Radio 4 that the Territorial Army (apparently under threat from the Defence Review) could become a civil defence force.

But surely, our Trident nuclear weapon system is supposed to deter "rogue states" from threatening us with their weapons of mass destruction?

Time for a new defence policy, I think.
NIGEL CHAMBERLAIN
Penrith, Cumbria

Name that tune

IT WAS Eric Morecambe, not Ernie Wise (Leader of 27 March – "Missing Notes of Welfare Reform") at the piano during the celebrated sketch with André Previn (for the purposes of the exercise known as "Andrew Previn") who declared – after the first faltering bar of the Grieg Piano Concerto – "I've played the right notes but not necessarily in the right order."

Many a failed politician may have echoed those sentiments.
PHILIP ASHTON
Glossop, Derbyshire



MILES KINGTON

BY SPECIAL request, here is more of the long-lost Shakespeare play *The History of King Tony*, which chronicles the doings of Tony Blair and his reign over Britain...

The scene is the Palace at Westminster, where Duke Prescott and several noblemen are conferring secretly. Enter Earl Dobson.
Dobson: I would have audience with King Anthony

On very urgent matters of the state. So stand aside and let me through to him. That he and I may save the nation's health. Prescott: Steady there, old bearded one! Hold hard!

There is a queue to see the king, our lord. You, of all people, should a queue respect. For here in Britain's green, arthritic land A queue and medicine go often hand in hand. Baron Blunkett: I've heard it said that when a doctor's seen Just walking in the street or passing by, A queue will form behind him, naturally.

Of people hoping he will see them first. Though none of them has ailment to report. Prescott: I've heard it said that many wait so long

To see a doctor or the surgeon's knife, That some of them are cured before the time The doctor bends his beady eye on them. Blunkett: And others die before they can be seen!

Which, in truth, is curing of a sort. Prescott: Aye, for bacon that is cured is always dead! Blunkett: This is a merry jest, Duke Prescott, I like it well

Dobson: Come, cease thy prattling – let me see the King. Prescott: He is not here. He is to France away.

There to address the Froggy parliament And show them how he speaks their foreign lingo. 'Bonjour, messieurs! Je suis Euro-Tony!' Dobson: Is that what he doth say?

Prescott: It matters naught. It matters only how he speaks and smiles. For what he says is always secondary. Know you not our well-beloved king? Content is nothing – style is everything. Dobson: These are treacherous words, O gentle Duke.

Prescott: I care not what I say, I am a man who speaks his mind with total honesty.

Blunkett: And that is why our Tony is the King. And you, rough Prescott, his mere underling! They all laugh and depart. The scene changes to a blasted heath in Kent. A broken sign reads "Site For Ye New High Speed Rail Link, Perchance". Three spin doctors sit round a flickering TV screen.

First Spin Doctor: Bubble, bubble, Nine O'clock News! Second Spin Doctor: Watch the headlines blow a fuse!

Third Spin Doctor: Get on the buzzer to News at Ten. All: Tell them not to say it again!

First Spin Doctor: Listen to the wild wind moan! Second Spin Doctor: Listen on your mobile phone!

Third Spin Doctor: See the wandering stranger come! All: Let us have a little fun! Enter King Tony on horseback – which is faster than going by train. He is talking to himself.

King Tony: Au revoir, messieurs! Je m'en vais chez moi! Ah, yes, my grasp of French has made its mark!

But what is this? Who are these creepy types With mobile phones and Psion organisers Who fawn on me in their Armani suits? First Spin Doctor: All hail, Tony, that art King of Britain!

King Tony: Tis true, I am. But everyone knows that. Second Spin Doctor: All hail, the President of Europe, all hail!

King Tony: What's that? Oh, chairman for a year, you mean! And, I believe, the youngest ever seen.

Third Spin Doctor: All hail, Tony, that shall be King Rupert's heir. And inherit his vast empire everywhere! The spin doctors vanish, smiling sardonically. King Tony: Stay, you devilish media hacks, oh stay!

And tell me more before you fly away! One spin doctor returns. Spin Doctor: King Tony, I will tell you all I know.

If I can be Minister with no portfolio. King Tony: Yes, yes, you can! I'll promise anything. If I can follow Rupert, the great media king! More of this riveting stuff tomorrow...

Beat the Millennium Bug or everyone catches a cold



TONY
BLAIR

ON DEFUSING A
TIME BOMB

TICKING away inside many of our computers is a potential technical time bomb. From the computers and electronic systems which pay our wages to those which control our traffic lights, from the computers on which our children look up encyclopedia entries to the one on which I'm writing this, all the computers now vital to the way we live modern life must be adapted as we approach the year 2000.

The new millennium will be a clear cause for celebration – in Britain, and around the world. But in the run-up to the year 2000, what's known as the Millennium Bug is a big issue – and a big problem. The root cause of it sounds trivial: the failure of many operating systems, in PCs, mainframes or embedded chips, to distinguish between the year 2000 and the year 1900. I'm no information technology expert, but I know that, unless we act, the consequences of the Millennium Bug could be severe.

Many business leaders are warning that, unless the problem of the Millennium Bug is tackled as a priority, we could be facing a serious threat to our economic performance. Today, I shall be talking and listening to people from all over Britain who run small and medium-sized companies, making sure they understand the importance of being certain that their firms are ready.

Britain is leading the way in tackling the Bug. Just as we have taken action on education, health, crime and jobs to ensure that, step by step, Britain is getting better, we are taking action on the Millennium Bug. We have made it a priority at this year's G8 meeting of the world's richest countries, for our Presidency of the European Union and for the Europe-Asia Summit meeting in London this week.

Global awareness remains patchy. In a recent survey by the World Bank, only 37 out of 128 borrowing member countries said they were aware of it. Only six countries have set up nation awareness-raising campaigns like Action 2000 – our drive to help companies and people in Britain deal with the problem.

Developing countries, in particular, will need more help. That is why, today, I will announce that we are putting £10m into a new World Bank Trust Fund to provide experts and training to developing countries. We hope that our G8 and EU partners will be able to follow suit.

At home, if we want to remain strong and competitive into the next millennium, we have to deal with this problem now. There is a risk that our growth prospects will be damaged as companies divert resources to cope with computer failures. Some might even go bust because they can't fix them.

The Action 2000 campaign is helping raise awareness in the private sector. Today, I will

tell them that we are increasing their budget from £1m to £17m to help it do even more.

With a national publicity campaign backed up by a website and a hotline to direct small and medium businesses to where they can get help, Action 2000 is having an effect. Awareness in that sector is now at nearly 100 per cent. But 25 per cent of companies haven't started taking action yet and they need to do it now.

So, there has been progress, but not enough. Today, we are unveiling a new package of measures to help companies acquire the skills they need. Using £70m announced in Gordon Brown's Budget, we will help small- and medium-sized companies develop IT skills to assess and fix systems which will be affected by the bug.

We will offer a £1,300 time-limited grant for people to train in how to look for and solve the Year 2000 problem. If we get the response from business we are looking for, there will be an army of 20,000 "bug busters" fully trained between now and next April. This is a perfect opportunity to train young people in IT skills or to bring older unemployed or retired people back into the workforce, launched on a new career in information technology.

Business will need to know that its efforts to tackle the bug are matched in the public sector. There's little point having sorted out your business if the Inland Revenue, the benefits system, hospitals and local authorities have failed to sort out theirs.

On coming to office, one of the first things we did was to ask for an update of the Government's Year 2000 plans. David Clark, the minister responsible for public services, is working to make sure that all parts of the public sector match the standards of the best. He's reporting to Parliament every three months on progress and has estimated that tackling the bug problem in central government will cost in the region of £400m. The best estimate of the cost of dealing with it across the public sector is up to £3bn. That figure might, of course, change. However, we are assured that money is being set aside from within existing budgets to cover it.

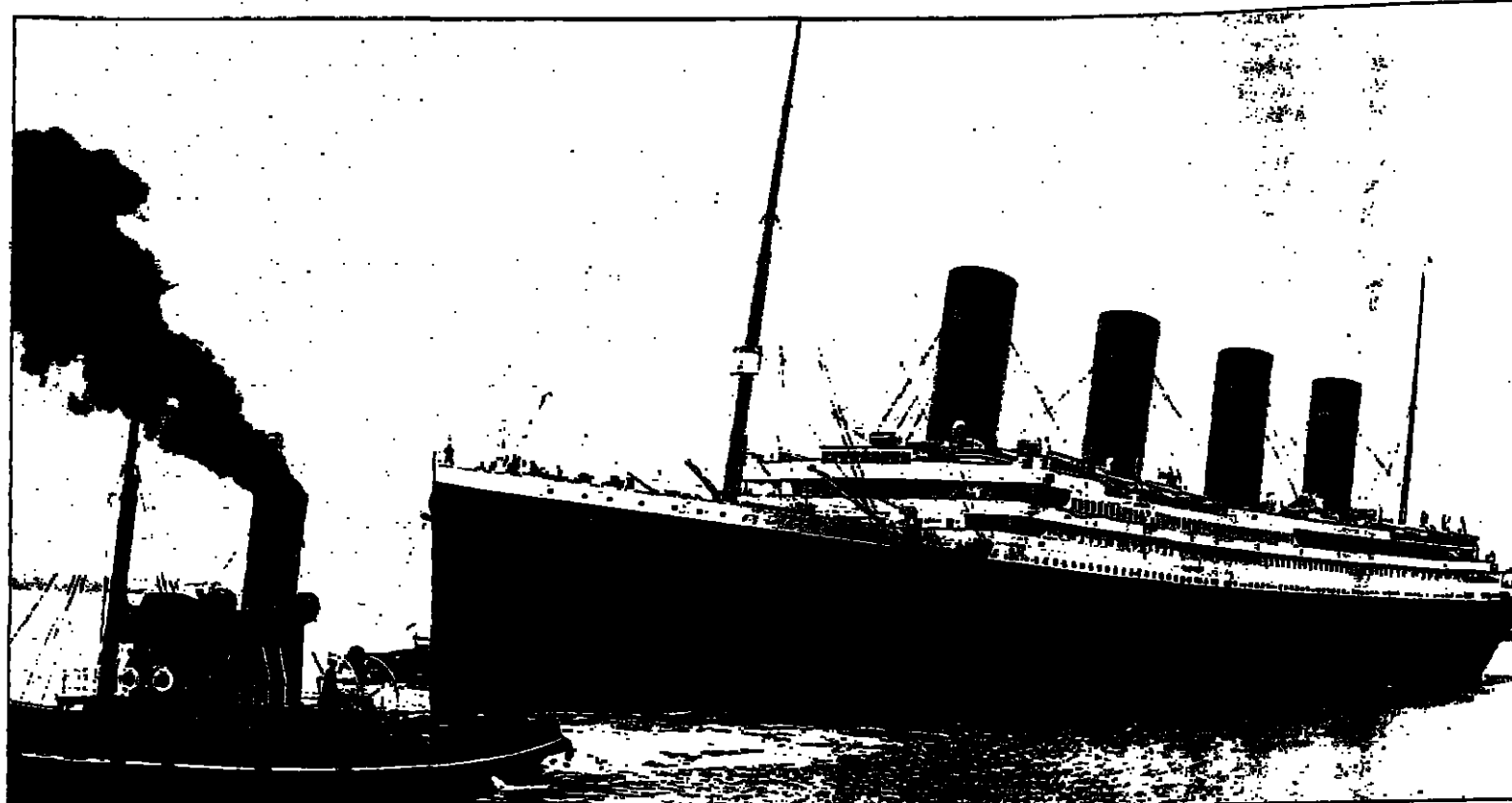
Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, chairs a Cabinet group to co-ordinate action on the bug across public and private sectors. And, today, I am setting up a new public/private sector team based in the Cabinet Office to ensure the delivery of that better co-ordination.

Within the public sector, the Health Service and local government have a special responsibility. Without careful preparation, there could be major disruption to essential services such as benefit payments or even to emergency services such as hospitals, the fire and the police.

Some problems can only be tackled locally because each area faces different risks. Today, John Prescott and Sir Jeremy Beecham, the chairman of the Local Government Association, are writing to every local authority leader and chief executive asking them to set up their own task forces to raise awareness in their local areas and to co-ordinate action between the private and public sector locally.

I know that many companies and organisations are well advanced in dealing with this problem. I know that others are working hard to overcome the difficulties they are facing. But I want to be sure that every company, every organisation and every computer-user in Britain is taking action to defuse this technical time bomb – so that Britain can enter the new millennium confident of being able to meet its challenges.

Why does the Titanic so fascinate us? It's a story about the hour of our death



A ship of grace and power, sinkable perhaps but too beautiful to die, a vessel whose streamlined funnels spoke of the future Photograph: Daily Mirror

Arabs see the West's weakness, others spot sexual symbolism. Robert Fisk finds meaning behind a disaster

THE TITANIC sank on my father's thirteenth birthday. He always remembered the day, not just because his Birkenhead home was across the Mersey from the head office of the White Star Line but because the Fisks were seafarers. My grandfather Edward was an officer on the Cutty Sark; a 19th-century snapshot of the tea clipper's crew in Sydney – now in the museum aboard the restored sailing ship at Greenwich – contains a face that looks startlingly similar to my own.

Four decades later, my mum and dad took me to see *A Night to Remember* at the old Maidstone Granada cinema. I still recall how my mother reached for her handkerchief as Kenneth More – playing an avuncular Second Officer Lightholler – gently took a sleeping child from the arms of his doomed father and put the little boy in the lifeboat.

Three years ago, I was talking to the daughter of a *Titanic* victim in the tiny Lebanese Christian village of Kfar Mishki; 123 Lebanese were down on

the *Titanic* but their families received no compensation from the White Star Line – they had boarded as wait-listed passengers at Cherbourg and their names were thus never entered on the official passenger list. Their fate is represented in James Cameron's new film by a demeaning three-second scene of a man in Turkish clothes trying to translate a list of the liner's emergency instructions.

Yet, the publicity surrounding the latest sinkapic cannot account for our fascination with the *Titanic*. On a flight out of Beirut last week, I found three passengers – two Lebanese and a Frenchman – reading books about the ship, one of them Walter Lord's original account of the disaster that inspired *A Night to Remember*, another Robert Ballard's record of his underwater discovery of the wreck.

Of course, the disaster has long been regarded as symbolic – of the class system that lay like a cancer at the heart of British society, of the arrogance of power that would be swept away in the world war which broke out two years later. And it's easy to see how the nobility of sacrifice shown by those who believed in women and children first – the rules of war which held true in the 19th century – was abandoned amid the final savagery aboard the doomed ship when "every man for himself" was so soon to encapsulate the chaos of our 20th-century wars.

Several Arabs have insisted to me that the ship's fate proves how false are our superior claims for western technology (along with Cruise missiles, Stealth bombers and other anti-Saddam devices) and that God truly proved greater than man when the *Titanic* went down (God presumably being represented by the iceberg). Yet far away, in Dublin, Kevin Myers has been arguing in the *Irish Times* that the new awareness of the vessel's fate should help his countrymen come to regard the *Titanic* as an Irish story. It was, after all, designed by Irishmen and built by Irishmen (at Harland and Wolff in Belfast).

I partially subscribe to this theory, although it is not a romantic one: in reality, the Irish built the ship, the British sank it – and drowned a lot of Irishmen and women in the process. But it was the last great Anglo-Irish project before the 1916 Rising (which was also, in its way, an Anglo-Irish project, though with somewhat greater ramifications). Andrews, the Irish designer, remains one of the tragedy's heroes, along with Captain Smith, who spent some of his last minutes issuing his crew with guns to control the crowds round the lifeboats.

It was George Bernard Shaw (another Irishman) who saw through our hypocrisy. Only the English, he wrote after the sinking, could turn into a hero a man who steered his brand new liner at full speed into an iceberg and then started shooting his passengers. In

Cameron's new version of the disaster, it is First Officer Murdoch who starts shooting (at Irishmen, of course) as the steerage hordes try to save their lives.

And it is significant – though missed by the critics – that the new *Titanic* is distinctly anti-British. Courage is shown by the "unsinkable" Mollie Brown but especially by the fictional American Winslett-DiCaprio duo. British passengers are almost invariably stuck-up, deceitful or violent. Kenneth More's avuncular Lightholler has been replaced by a night-mare school prefect who points his revolver at the steerage hordes and screams at them: "Get back – or I'll shoot you all like dogs."

But the star of all the *Titanic* films – and of our fascination – remains the ship itself. Fr F W Browne was an Irish priest who travelled on the very first Southampton-Queensdown sector of the *Titanic*'s transatlantic route and took a remarkable series of photographs of the first day and a half of the doomed voyage. His last picture of the *Titanic* – the very last photograph ever – shows a ship of grace and power, sinkable perhaps but too beautiful to die, a vessel whose streamlined funnels speak of the future rather than the past.

Some have suggested a sexual message in the *Titanic* saga, the virgin ship on its maiden

voyage ravaged by the iceberg. In an earlier American film of the sinking – in which George C Scott plays a bug-eyed Captain Smyth – a female *Titanic* passenger is raped by a White Star Line crew member only three minutes before the iceberg is seen penetrating the vulnerable iron skin of the ship.

Ultimately, the ship is one reason why *Titanic* could win no best actor awards. Because the best actor is the machine which, in an odd way, makes Cameron's repulsive 10 seconds of silence for the dead at the Oscars ceremony – that's one Hollywood second for every 150 victims – all the more seedy.

Yet there is one sequence in the film of unmistakable beauty and power, a few seconds that explain the ship's enduring fascination. It shows the *Titanic* on its last day, disappearing in the late afternoon across a massive expanse of pale green Atlantic as the old lady survivor recounts her story. "It was the last time," she says, "that sunlight would ever shine upon the *Titanic*." And it is this element of inevitable death that draws the world back, again and again, to the night of 14 April, 1912. Glorious to the end, its lights blazing over the night-time sea, the story of the *Titanic* is about the hour of our death. I think that's why my father – dead these past six years – often talked about the ship that died on his birthday.

Why Germany envies elective dictatorship



ANNE
MCELVOY

ON LESSONS
FROM ABROAD

AFTER a surfeit of New Labour's bouncy triumphalism, you might just find yourself hankering for the straightening smack of pessimism. In that case, visit Germany. Its national anthems were adapted to fit national moods, the Federal Republic's would currently be one of the more depressing Leonard Cohen numbers and not *De Ream's Things Can Only Get Better*.

This is nothing new. Ever since I first went there as a teenager, there has been a German crisis. The first *A-level* essays we wrote in German were about the early 1980s trauma of *Schulstress* – the intolerable strain of being educated. Then there was the environment and the arms race, nuclear power and the effect of Chernobyl on vegetables in the Rhineland. With 1989 came the mythical threat of starving Russians pouring over the Oder-Neisse line.

These anxieties were either ephemeral or easily addressed. The rise of the Greens changed government policy on deforestation and curtailed pollution. The deployment of Cruise missiles did not lead to nuclear holocaust. Russians flooding to Berlin today are not a raggle-taggle army of despair, but well-behaved gentlemen in large if often ill-gotten Mercedes buying artworks and Cartier.

All countries have their way of seeming peculiar to outsiders. Germany's is the tendency of this most stable and

prosperous society to mutter to itself at regular intervals: "We're all doomed." Now, however, with the solid Deutschmark about to melt into the less reliable Euro, unemployment approaching five million and a tired coalition at the end of its natural life, it seems as good a time as any to look on the dark side.

The Königswinter conference, the annual gathering where British and German public figures exchange worries, has just been held in Edinburgh. Arnulf Baring, the historian, was the official Cassandra. This befits a man whose latest book, *Is Germany Finished?* has a contents list which goes, "Germany's future... failed innovation, shrinking business class, scandalous subsidies, fatal unemployment, stifling bureaucracy, rotten education system, ageing society..." Baring's views are not wholly accepted in the German elite, but at the conference, bankers, managers and politicians alike shifted uneasily in their chairs as he spoke.

The difference between doom-mongers and those of the 1980s is that the PR voting system and federal government now seem to be part of the problem and not the solution. The relationship between regional government and the centre is, in theory, a near-perfect exercise in local democracy. But it is expensive. It duplicates functions and inhibits change. The fundamentals of Germany's success –

single-union plants in industry which gave it "modernised" trade unions from the start and steady monetary policy from the Bundesbank – were imposed by the allies. It is easier for a consensual system to maintain than to innovate.

PR does not help. The opposition Social Democrats are constrained by the view that their likely bedfellows – other than in a grand coalition – are the Greens. Germans like the Greens in their place, that is influencing policy but not making it. The prospect of them holding the balance of power is

The UK could profit from Germany's lesson that too much consensualism is as damaging as too little

too racy to contemplate. All of this comes at a time when this weekend's conference was convened in Scotland to mark devolution and while, elsewhere, Lord Jenkins of Hillhead is presiding over his commission on electoral reform for the UK.

I straw-poll German guests on these two matters. On devolution, they thought it blindingly obvious that the Scots should have a say in running their own affairs. "What took you so long?" asked one politician. "What indeed,

On the possible switch to a PR system, they thought that we should think twice and then say no. "It is obvious that we have to have it because of our recent past," said one young businessman. "But you don't have to wear this sackcloth. It's better that, whether you have a Thatcher or a Blair, they can make decisions and enact them without endless delay."

While British newspapers cavilled about the lack of concrete proposals in the welfare Green Paper, the Germans considered it a dynamic leap. Their own social security system

encourages people to become "benefit entrepreneurs". The middle classes are the worst offenders. The record for long-stay parking in higher education is held by a man who was an undergraduate for 13 years.

On electoral reform, Germany's experience convinces me that it is impossible to avoid a central tension – between the desire to maximise representative democracy and to deliver strong government capable of implementing reforms.

At present, our electoral method is a powerful force for change but fails to build consensus. In Germany, each voter's preference is significant but the outcome nationally is a parliament of quite extraordinary dullness. The elected second chamber replicates the *modus operandi* of the first – beware a Blairised House of Lords – and politicians resemble each other far more closely than they resemble most of their voters.

Let us be bold enough to accept that no single electoral system can serve all the needs of a United Kingdom which is in the process of embracing its own form of federalism, but which could profit from Germany's lesson that too much consensualism is as damaging as too little.

In local government and elections for mayors, I have no desire to be restricted by my party political views. Anyone who can prove themselves an effective provider – or regulator – of services is welcome to my vote. But I don't regard general elections and national government in the same way.

Supporters of New Labour's key reforms, in welfare, health and, hopefully, education, know that such progress is only possible because an earlier minority government made some unpopular, distinctly non-consensual decisions. Germany searches in vain for "Our Tony Blair". But it is easier to get a Mr Blair in a system that gave you Margaret Thatcher first.

Life saving treatments
for children
with cancer

To find out more read our special report.
Making Cancer History on Wednesday
1st April in The Eye

THE INDEPENDENT

cancer
research
campaign

Baroness Lestor of Eccles

THE LABOUR Party Conference has loved our flaming red-headed girl – the diminutive Ellen Wilkinson, Barbara Castle, Jo Richardson, and the not so diminutive Joan Lestor. Joan – no Labour MP could call her Miss Lestor – was, in her own estimation of descending order of importance, a Labour Party member, a member of the NEC, a Member of Parliament, and a Minister of the Crown.

Devoid of sense of position, let alone pomposity, she was an authentic “darling of the conference” for the very good reason that she was an authentic representative of the conscience of the party. Undidactic, Lestor mused to her many friends and agonised over issues, where good socialist conscience did not match what was deemed by the leadership of the party to be politically feasible. Michael Foot did not exaggerate when he said that Joan Lestor gave her heart and soul to the Labour Party. It was a stout heart and wholly decent soul.

Politicians usually like to gossip about their backgrounds, parents and grandparents. Not so Joan Lestor: she resolutely declined to be drawn. Once, however the curtain did lift. Shortly after the 1966 general election when, appointed by her venerable predecessor, the anti-colonialist champion Fenner Brockway, she took over his seat in Eton and Slough, she said to me: “I’ve had an invitation to go to speak to the Eton College Political Society in my constituency. As the only Old Etonian in the Parliamentary Labour Party, Tam, give me some guidance. Should I accept?”

“Certainly, Joan, you go,” I said, “and you’ll be well received.” She was. It happened that I was a guest of the Eton Political Society some months later. All the 16- to 18-year-olds could talk about to me was how wonderful (and how daisy!) Joan Lestor had been. She had op-

ened Etonian eyes on the other side of the argument about Rhodesia and created a favourable impression at a time when Harold Wilson was being disadvantaged by Ian Smith in the newspapers read by Etonians.

Lestor was tremendously good both with British Africans, her particular friend being Dr David Pitt, later Lord Pitt of Hampstead (she went to Grenada for his funeral), and with young African politicians from all parts of the southern cone. Along with the late Christopher Rowland and MPs such as Robert Hughes she developed lifelong friendships with those who were eventually to take power not only in South Africa but in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Angola and Mozambique. Unlike many MPs who are interested in foreign affairs, she resisted the temptation to become a universal expert and concentrated her effort through repeated visits to southern Africa.

Curious as to how she had got on at Eton, I asked her. She replied: “It was a different plant.” One thing that had struck her was the confidence of the boys created by family roots which could be traced back into the mists of time. She said with unaccustomed melancholy: “You see, unlike you I’m rootless. And we rootless people need a lot of help in life.”

She herself was brought up by her paternal grandmother. Her father, a journalist, was a leading light in the Socialist Workers’ Party of Great Britain. I believe it was this sense of the vulnerabilities of childhood she had managed to overcome which propelled her to campaign tirelessly on behalf of children. First, as a nursery teacher, having taken a diploma in sociology at London University, and then after election to the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party, characteristically eschewing the easier route, the Women’s

Section, and opting for the Constituency Section.

In an era, unlike today, when the NEC was not emasculated, and its Home Policy Committee mattered very much indeed, even when Labour was in government, Lestor was effective in the view of those seasoned veterans, her colleagues Ian Mikardo and Richard Crossman. The causes she brought to the attention of the House of Commons were, unobtrusively, those of the nursery school teacher.

Without a proper nutritional base in early childhood, she said, people could suffer heart disease later on; that, as we ought to know, was one of the major causes of death in the United Kingdom. An estimated 30 per cent of such deaths are attributed to a wrong or poor diet. The disease process, Lestor continually argued, begins in childhood: thickening of the arteries had been discovered in children under the age of 10. Obesity was on the increase, she said; I think she was the first politician to make an impact on this subject.

In 1968 she was on the list of MPs to be put forward for junior office produced by Roy Jenkins, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, but of a different wing of the party. This was an indication of the regard in which she was held. Eventually, in spite of being turned down once by Harold Wilson as being “too impossible”, by which he meant being too much of an uncomfortable crusader, she was given office, with responsibility for nursery education, in October 1969.

With the return of the Labour government in April 1974 she was given junior ministerial office in the Foreign Office. Her relationship with the Foreign Secretary became uneasy, as she was for ever pushing the cause of Africans to a point further than James Callaghan wished to go. So in

1975 she was given a sideways move back to the department of Education and Science.

Faced with the cuts of 1976, she resigned on a matter of principle. To the consternation of the Left, who very much supported Lestor’s stand, her place was immediately taken by Margaret Jackson, then Member of Parliament for Lincoln, and perceived as being harder left than Joan Lestor, and now Mrs Margaret Jackson, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. Arguably it was this unforgotten action and the alacrity with which she took Joan Lestor’s place that reduced the chances of Jackson/Beckett’s leading the Labour Party 20 years later.

I well remember this exchange on 19 April 1977 immediately before Jim Callaghan rose at Question Time.

Miss Joan Lestor asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many local education authority nursery schools provided as a result of the urban programme are to be closed as a result of the cuts in public expenditure.

Miss Margaret Jackson: “Local education authorities are not obliged to inform my Right Hon friend of their intentions to close maintained nursery schools. My department knows of only one such closure and the school concerned was not provided under the urban programme.”

I remember the apprehensive look on the face of Shirley Williams, then Secretary of State for Education, and the frown which went round the Labour benches when Lestor rose to ask Jackson if she agreed that schools and classes made available under the urban programme were provided because of a desperate need in areas of special provision. Would Jackson say how she intended to ensure that the state-maintained in the 1976 public expenditure White Paper that areas of special need would continue to have provision was carried out? We all knew that Lestor, as so often, was speaking for the party.

Lestor continued to campaign on a host of important educational issues: day nurseries, maternity services, one-parent families, day-care of pre-school children and maternity provision. One among many of her particular causes was the provision of daytime education for pregnant schoolgirls and schoolgirl mothers. She was a person of infinite compassion towards any, including her parliamentary colleagues, who got into trouble.

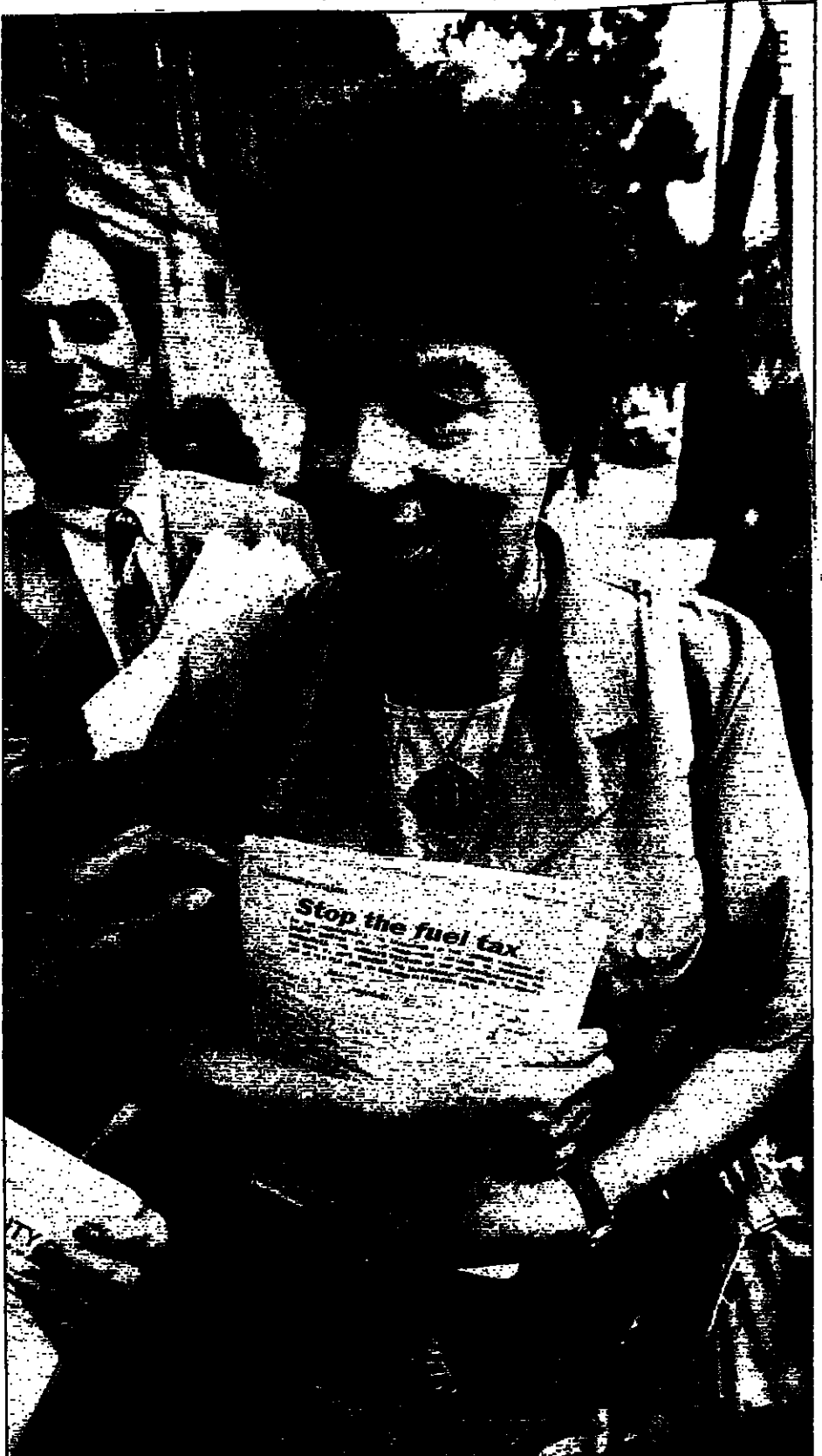
On 18 March 1997, for an obscure adjournment debate, a large array of Labour MPs doughnaded Joan Lestor on an occasion where it is normal that one back-bencher and one minister with the odd government whip on the bench occupy the House of Commons. This we knew would be Joan Lestor’s last speech. It began:

I have served as a Member of Parliament for 26 years, having entered the House 30 years ago, been rejected for four years by Slough but then been embraced in a love affair with Eccles. During that time I have done many things and had many interests as a parliamentarian, but the issue that has dominated my life has been that of children, both here and abroad, and I wanted to go out on a note that highlighted that interest.

The subject that she had chosen for her farewell after three decades was “child poverty”.

Tam Dalyell

Joan Lestor, nursery teacher and politician: born Vancouver, British Columbia 11 November 1931; member, London County Council 1962-64; MP (Labour) for Eton and Slough 1966-1983, for Eccles 1987-97; member, National Executive Committee of the Labour Party 1967-82, 1987-97, Chairman of the Labour Party 1977-78, Chairman, International Committee of the Labour Party 1978-97; Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department of Education and Science 1969-70, Foreign Office 1974-75, Department of Education and Science 1975-76; created 1997 Baroness Lestor of Eccles; (one adopted son, one adopted daughter); died London 27 March 1998.



‘Stop the fuel tax’: Joan Lestor representing the conscience of the Labour Party

Joan Maynard

ETCHED into my memory is the look of pained impatience on Hugh Gaiskell’s face as he sat on the platform at the Spa Grand Hall in Scarborough in 1958. The occasion was the Labour Party Conference Rural Areas debate on the policy document *Prosper the Plough*.

As was her wont at every conference in the 1950s and 1960s, a striking jet-black-haired Yorkshire lass (no gender balance then!) strode to the platform and with no inhibitions whatsoever harangued us all on the urgent need to nationalise the land – every arable acre of it. This was the perennial delegate from the Thirsk and Malton constituency, Joan Maynard.

In 1958, she moved the resolution

that this conference, recognising that socialism cannot be achieved as long as private ownership of the land remains, instructs the National Executive Committee to expedite acceptance of the nationalisation of land as a policy, without which many agricultural problems have no solution.

What were the economic reasons for public ownership? She maintained that the size of our farms was uneconomic on account of the increased mechanisation of agriculture. It had become uneconomic in many cases to own some of the machinery which was necessary because of the size of our farms. We couldn’t hope to change this question of the size of our farms without public ownership. Her own brother, she told the 1958 conference, who farmed a smallholding, would find it uneconomic to have a combine harvester – he needed it only for three or four hours each year.

As a member of the National Union of Agricultural Workers, she argued that their policy statement *Health and Wealth Under Your Feet* was a much better statement on the agricultural industries than the official par-

ty policy of *Prosper the Plough* drawn up by those farmers Richard Crossman and James Callaghan, among others. Her document, she proudly boasted, had been drawn up by the workers in the industry and amended and agreed by two biannual conferences. I remember her turning towards the pipe-smoking, sedate Alderman Edwin Gooch, a Norfolk MP and long-term Secretary of the Agricultural Workers, and bearing him for allowing the party to think that agricultural workers were junior partners: I would remind the paid officials of our union that they are paid to do what the members decide. We did not carry land nationalisation in my union for fun, but because we believe in it and expect them to fight for it.

Maynard believed that, when we nationalised the land, we should put the workers in control of the industry. “They are the people who know most about it and should decide what the policy of the industry should be.” We needed to stop tinkering with Toryism and trying to make the existing system work.

When Joan Maynard arrived in the House of Commons, not for her beloved home town of Thirsk but for the Brightside Division of Sheffield in the heart of the Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire, she did so in the footsteps of Eddie Griffiths, workers’ representative on the board of British Steel, who had been ousted by the local party.

In her maiden speech of 6 November 1974, Maynard said: I come here not only to represent Brightside, but as the only sponsored Member for farm workers. My background was entirely rural until I became a Member for Brightside. I am the daughter of a smallholder. As I come as a sponsored Member for farm workers I speak for one of the lowest-paid groups. At the moment, farm workers are on a basic rate of £25 a week. It would be a mistake to

think that the only people who live in poverty are pensioners, low-paid people and particularly those with families are often living in poverty.

Although I represent an industrial seat, I have the full backing... of my constituency to put forward the farm workers’ case on an issue of vital importance... My constituents understand the human problems brought by the tied-cottage system in agriculture. The system means that a man’s home is dependent on his job.

And month in, month out, Maynard was indeed the champion of the agricultural workers, serving without a break on the Parliamentary Select Committee on Agriculture from 1975 to 1987. I was not surprised in the least to be told by aristocratic Conservative friends of mine on this committee that they both liked Joan Maynard and, however quixotic they thought her views, they were impressed by the useful contribution she made.

From the moment she arrived in the House of Commons there was hardly a left-wing cause which she did not ardently espouse: as Chairman of the British Peace Committee she wanted troops out of Northern Ireland; she argued on the National Executive for the lifting of the ban on contact with foreign Communist parties in 1974; she voted against the Prevention of Terrorism Bill in November 1975 and on every subsequent possible occasion.

She backed Tony Benn for Leader of the Labour Party in March 1976 and in July that year invited the official Sinn Féin spokespersons to the House of Commons and demanded to know whether the British army was setting up brothels in Belfast for espionage purposes. She fervently opposed Jim Callaghan’s Lib-Lab Pact of March 1977; she rebelled against devolution; she was the first MP to sponsor Ken Livingstone’s Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, which created the *Lab-*

our Herald, Socialist Organiser and *London Labour Briefing*.

She opposed the sale of Harrier jump-jets to China to avoid damaging Anglo-Soviet relations; on cruelty grounds, she urged a ban on import of *pâté de foie gras* in 1980; she urged an immediate ceasefire in the Falklands in May 1982. She argued for the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people and many other radical anti-Zionist Arab causes.

She co-nominated Eric Heffer for Leader of the Labour Party and Michael Meacher for Deputy Leader in October 1983 and warned Neil Kinnock: “You walk your shoes straight or else.” She launched into the defence of the Greenham Common women in March 1984 and criticised the Army for harassing them. Above all, she opposed the one member, one vote by postal ballots in selecting MPs.

As she became older but no less, it seemed to us, energetic, she acquired an assortment of nicknames. The journalist Andrew Alexander memorably described her as “Sheffield’s answer to Rosa Luxembourg”. Others saw her as Yorkshire’s own “La Pasionaria”. Most common of all was “Stalin’s Grandmother”, so inflexible was she in her socialist views.

I once summoned up the temerity to ask her how she fancied the sobriquet “Stalin’s Grandmother”. Matter-of-factly, she challenged the nickname on the surmise that Stalin’s real grandmother was probably a pillar of the Russian Orthodox Church in Georgia, “which might be difficult for me”.

Joan Maynard was marvelously unconcerned about self. It was the cause that mattered, the struggle that counted, the advancement of the ideas of the campaign group of MPs which she chaired.

When he was Father of the House to which he had arrived as a young gentleman in 1929, I asked Sir Robin Turton about his view of Maynard, who had been the life and soul of the Labour Party in his Thirsk and Malton constituency.

Actually, I like her and respect her. She is politically utterly Utopian and I might think quite dotty. But she is a good-natured woman, a kind woman and well thought of by people who regard her views with ambivalence.

The local regard was the reason why she was made a Justice of the Peace back in 1950. Turton explained that, election after election, all he had to do was to turn up at local shows and ask,

Which is the lesser evil: me or Miss Maynard, who would like to take into public ownership everything in sight and make the broad acres of Thirsk and Malton into a collective farm?

It would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle these days than for the likes of Maynard to be selected as a Labour candidate, least of all in a winnable seat. Probably there is not one selection test that she would have passed in the current state of politics. Yet, far from bringing the Labour Party into disrepute, she possessed heart and soul, which inspired many young people to come into politics. Joan Maynard had a real role in the public life of our country and we are the poorer without her like.

Tam Dalyell

Vera Joan Maynard, trade unionist and politician: born Easingwold, North Yorkshire 5 July 1921; Secretary, Yorkshire Area Agricultural and Allied Workers 1956-78; member, National Executive Committee of the Labour Party 1972-82, 1983-87; MP (Labour) for Sheffield Brightside 1974-87; member, Parliamentary Select Committee on Agriculture 1975-87; died Sowerby, North Yorkshire 27 March 1998.



‘British troops out of Ireland’: Joan Maynard – “Stalin’s Grandmother” – pleads a cause

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

BIRTHS

GIBBON: On 25 March, to Amanda (née Owen) and Michael, a son, George River Owen, a brother for Julia and William.

Announcements for BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS should be posted to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3QL. Telephone 0171-293 2012 or fax 0171-293 2010. Charges are £4.50 a line (VAT extra).

Birthdays

Mr John Allen, former Principal, Central School of Speech and Drama, 86; Lord Armstrong of Ilminster, former Secretary to the Cabinet, 71; Miss Sarah Badel, actress, 55; Mr Warren Beatty, actor, 61; Lord Browne-Wilkinson, a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 68; Mr Eric Clapton, rock guitarist, 53; Mr John Coates, naval architect, 76; Mr Alan Davidson, author, publisher and former diplomat, 74; Mr Martin Dunne, Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire, 60; Mr Graeme Edgar, rock performer, 55; Mr George Eason, former Chief Constable, Dumfries and Galloway, 54; Professor Sir Ernst Gombrich, art historian, 89; Sir John Gray, marine

biologist, 80; Mr Rolf Harris, entertainer, 68; Professor Tony Hazard, former Regius Professor of Civil Law, Oxford University, 77; Mrs Beverly Hughes MP, 48; Sir John Jennings, former chairman, Shell Transport and Trading Co, 60; Professor Ron Johnston, Professor of Geography, Bristol University, 57; Nigel Jones MP, 50; Mr Frankie Laime, singer, 85; Mr Bernard Lyons, former chairman, UDS Group, 85; Lord MacLaurin of Knockworth, former chairman, Tesco, 61; Mr Peter Morgan, Editor, the *Mirror*, 33; Lord Rayner, former chairman, Marks and Spencer, 72; Mr Tom Sharpe, novelist and historian, 70; The Countess of Sutherland, Chief of the

Clan Sutherland, 77; General Sir Richard Turner, former Quarter Master General, 70; Sir John Wells, former MP, 73; Professor Aris Zuckerman, Dean, Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine, 66.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Prince Royal, Prince, Northern Lightship, Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, The Duke of Devon, Princess of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Gloucester, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Kent, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Rothesay, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, Prince of Wales, The Duke of Sussex, Prince of Wales, The Duke of York, Prince of Wales

Why projected returns paint a less than rosy picture

THE WEEK AHEAD



PETER THAL LARSEN

WHAT next for the Footsie? That's the question most investors are asking themselves after a manic first quarter in which the index of 100 leading shares rose by almost a fifth. The rise has surprised even the most optimistic of market observers, who had pencilled in year-end targets of 6,000 for the Footsie but never expected the market to get there in less than three months.

The first trick is explaining the reasons for the rise. According to Mark Brown and Gareth Williams, equity strategists at ABN AMRO, the investment bank, the re-rating of global equities in recent years can be explained by measuring Economic Value Added (EVA) – the difference between a company's return on capital and the cost of that capital. They show that, since the early 1980s, the world's 11 largest industrialised countries have been producing a positive EVA.

What's more, the level of EVA is forecast to hit a new high in 1998.

So far, so good. But since the stock market is effectively a way of discounting future expectations, the current level of EVA matters less than what is likely to happen in the future. And here the picture becomes less rosy. Because if returns on investment are high, companies are likely to invest more, thereby dragging down returns.

Another threat comes from pay rates. Although companies have been successful in increasing the share of economic cake gobbled up by profits – at the expense of workers' pay – this is unlikely to last. Private-sector pay rates are already rising by an average of more than 5 per cent a year. If this is sustained, profits will come under pressure.

This analysis leads Brown and Williams to argue that the quoted sector, excluding fi-

nancial stocks, has gone ex-growth. Although company analysts are still forecasting earnings growth of about 7 per cent for non-financial stocks, a top-down analysis suggests this is more likely to be 3 per cent.

They argue that investors should take refuge in financial and services companies, which offer some protection from this trend. If you're not a fund manager with a large portfolio to invest, however, it may be better to stay out of the market altogether.

The coming week is dominated by results from companies in the building & construction sector. By Friday, investors should have a good idea of whether recent reports of a slowdown in the sector are accurate or not.

Shares in Blue Circle, which reports full-year results on Monday, have staged a recovery this year after being pummeled by

sterling and the Asian crisis. The cement company is generally viewed as one of the best-run firms in the sector. But given its exposure to economic turmoil in Malaysia and increasing price competition in Chile, analysts will be carefully scrutinising its overseas activities. NatWest Markets expects profits to rise

to £340m from £297.6m. Also in cement is Rugby Group, which reports the following day. Investors will be looking for evidence that recent cost savings are coming through in the bottom line. Confirmation that the new £120m cement kiln, due to be up and running in August, is on schedule will also be welcomed. The new plant will allow Rugby to close down smaller, less efficient kilns. Finally, analysts will also be trying to gauge the exposure of the group's Australian division to turmoil in the Far East. Pre-tax profits are expected to be £74m (£60m).

On Wednesday, construction group Alfred McAlpine should produce full-year profits of £21m, up from £9.4m on the back of a booming construction sector. The company will also face questions about its enlarged homes division.

Life is tougher at RMC, the

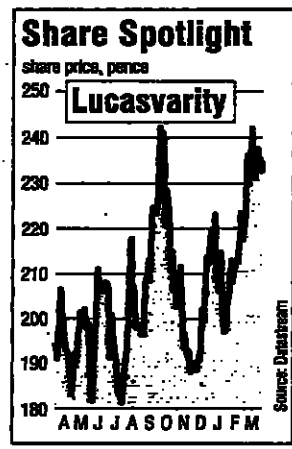
building materials group which is struggling to cope with the depressed German construction market. Although profits from the country probably rose by about 4 per cent in local currency, this turns into a 15 per cent drop once translated into sterling. Overall, profits expected up 4 per cent at £306m (£295.3m).

Manchester United kicks off the week with six months' results on Monday, fresh from a vital victory over Wimbledon in the Premier League. The Reds have had a terrible month. They were knocked out of the European Champion's League by Monaco and have Arsenal breathing down their necks in the Premiership. But that won't be reflected in the results, which are expected to show that profit before tax and transfers increased from £15.7m to £17.4m. Analysts will be looking for details of a new shirt sponsorship deal. United's

long-standing agreement with Sharp runs out this year and will not be renewed. Names including Ford are believed to be chasing the contract, which will set the benchmark for other football clubs.

Motor components group LucasVarity reports results tomorrow. Investors are still unconvinced that the transatlantic merger, now almost two years old, has delivered the promised benefits in the key braking systems division. With all the cutting out of the way analysts will be looking for an improvement in margins.

Chief executive Victor Rice will also face questions about acquisitions. Following the sale of its heavy duty braking division to Caterpillar last December, LucasVarity could easily splash out more than £1bn on an acquisition. However, it may instead beef up its rolling programme of share buy-backs.



Market	Stock	Price	Weekly	Index	Market	Stock	Price	Weekly	Index	Market	Stock	Price	Weekly	Index	Market	Stock	Price	Weekly	Index
Alcoholic Beverages	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Food	Foodst	28.50	+0.25	121	Health Care	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Pharmaceuticals	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Auto	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Food	Foodst	28.50	+0.25	121	Health Care	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Pharmaceuticals	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Chemicals	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Food	Foodst	28.50	+0.25	121	Health Care	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Pharmaceuticals	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Consumer Goods	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Food	Foodst	28.50	+0.25	121	Health Care	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Pharmaceuticals	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Energy	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Food	Foodst	28.50	+0.25	121	Health Care	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Pharmaceuticals	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Financial	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Food	Foodst	28.50	+0.25	121	Health Care	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Pharmaceuticals	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Health Care	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Food	Foodst	28.50	+0.25	121	Health Care	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Pharmaceuticals	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Industrial	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Food	Foodst	28.50	+0.25	121	Health Care	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Pharmaceuticals	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Media	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Food	Foodst	28.50	+0.25	121	Health Care	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Pharmaceuticals	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Real Estate	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Food	Foodst	28.50	+0.25	121	Health Care	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Pharmaceuticals	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Technology	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Food	Foodst	28.50	+0.25	121	Health Care	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Pharmaceuticals	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Telecommunications	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Food	Foodst	28.50	+0.25	121	Health Care	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Pharmaceuticals	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Utilities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Food	Foodst	28.50	+0.25	121	Health Care	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Pharmaceuticals	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Other	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Food	Foodst	28.50	+0.25	121	Health Care	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Pharmaceuticals	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121

do you really want to queue when there's no need?

for 24 hour banking call free 0800 24 24 24

First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc. First Direct, respects the Right to Privacy. For full written details of our services write to First Direct, Newport, Leeds LS9 2RE. First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc. First Direct, respects the Right to Privacy. For full written details of our services write to First Direct, Newport, Leeds LS9 2RE. First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc. First Direct, respects the Right to Privacy. For full written details of our services write to First Direct, Newport, Leeds LS9 2RE.

Market	Stock	Price	Weekly	Index	Market	Stock	Price	Weekly	Index	Market	Stock	Price	Weekly	Index
Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121
Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121	Government Securities	Alkerm	28.50	+0.25	121

Jan Leschly's package is matched by few executives anywhere

£66m for SB boss in biggest UK pay deal

By Andrew Yates

JAN LESCHLY, chief executive of SmithKline Beecham, has become the highest-paid director ever seen in a British boardroom. The former tennis star has been awarded share options and incentive schemes currently worth £66m. The share package comes on top of the £2.4m he earned last year, which included a bonus of more than £1.5m.

Mr Leschly is now one of the best-paid executives in the world. However, the City is beginning to question whether he is worth such a huge pay package. SmithKline could face demands to curb Mr Leschly's lavish awards. Institutional investors are becoming increasingly concerned about the value of shares and options awarded to Mr Leschly. They are particularly worried that he has accumulated a vast fortune despite coming under heavy criticism for failing to secure a merger first with American Home Products and then Glaxo Wellcome in the space of a month. The breakdown in merger talks wiped billions of pounds off the value of the drugs giant and caused widespread consternation in the City. Leschly's fortune dwarfs that of Sir Richard Sykes, his opposite number at Glaxo Wellcome.

Mr Leschly, 57, is one of the



Jan Leschly: Winning ways

has he did on the tennis courts.

Mr Leschly now lives mainly in America, based at SmithKline's Philadelphia headquarters. He left Denmark in 1979 to join Squibb Corporation, the US pharmaceutical group, where he showed his competitive streak by quickly climbing the corporate ladder. But after losing out in a fierce battle to win control of the group he left in 1990 to join SmithKline, becoming chief executive four years later. Born into a military family, he has always led from the front, maintaining an iron grip on the group. His ego and determination to keep control of SmithKline are believed to have contributed to the breakdown in merger talks.

SmithKline's non-executive directors have come under pressure from some shareholders to resurrect a merger with Glaxo Wellcome by removing Mr Leschly. However, if SmithKline is taken over he would be entitled to cash in his share options, prompting the biggest corporate pay-off ever seen.

SmithKline has one of the most generous share option and incentive schemes in the world. Jean-Pierre Garnier, chief operating officer, is sitting on a paper profit from options worth £20m and Hugh Collum, the group's finance director stands to make £12m.

But the City is questioning whether he is worth such a huge amount

most successful businessman to have come out of Denmark. But he came to the world of business relatively late in life.

Mr Leschly first showed his winning ways on the tennis court where he was ranked in the world's top ten, played in the Danish Davis Cup team and reached a Wimbledon quarter final. He has demonstrated the same drive for success and ruthlessness in the boardroom



Winning aroma: Gareth Lloyd Jones (left) and Simon Brookes, two of Madisons founders

Rich coffee flotation

By Andrew Yates

THREE founders of Madisons coffee bars stand to become multi-millionaires when the group floats on the Alternative Investment Market.

Gareth Lloyd Jones, who used to run Tie-Rack outlets, Simon Brookes, a former property expert with Sir Robert McAlpine, and Mark Horrocks, a fund manager, all stand to make paper profits running into millions. They are also considering making an instant profit by selling shares in the flotation. City Gourmet, the group which owns the chain, will be valued at £15m-£20m when it joins the market in the next few months.

The three entrepreneurs bought the business in 1995. The group operates seven coffee bars and plans to open 12 sites during 1998. It is looking at new outlets in Cardiff and Manchester. The coffee-bar concept was imported from

America and the idea is catching on fast in the UK. The popularity of the new bars has prompted Seattle Coffee Company to unveil its own flotation plans. However, City Gourmet claims that by offering a wide range of teas and sandwiches it appeals to a wider audience than rivals.

Meanwhile John Weatherill, a former mobile phone salesman, and his family are sitting on a £15m fortune after JWE, the mobile phone distributor, confirmed plans to float on the stock market next month. Mr Weatherill is selling shares worth £3m in the flotation and his family will still own more than 60 per cent of the group, which is likely to be valued at around £20m. JWE has released a pathfinder prospectus predicting pre-tax profits of not less than £1.5m for the year to March. JWE Telecom has a chain of 21 mobile phone shops and acts as a distributor of phones to 300 dealers. It is raising roughly £4m of new money to expand the business.

Anti-fraud ICL plan in doubt

By Michael Harrison

DOUBTS are growing about the Government's commitment to a £1.5bn project awarded to ICL in 1996 to automate the benefit payments system - one of the biggest contracts handed out under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

A row has also broken out between the Social Security Secretary, Harriet Harman, and the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, over the two-year delay, which had been forecast to produce savings of at least £150m a year by stamping out benefit fraud. There was no mention of the project in the Green Paper on Welfare Reform published last week by Frank Field, the minister responsible, even though eradication of benefit fraud is one of the Government's key priorities.

The project involves automating all benefit payments through the network of 19,000 Post Offices by replacing girocheques and order books with electronic smart cards. The Benefits Agency, which awarded the contract, is simultaneously updating its own computer systems at a cost of hundreds of millions of pounds.

The system was supposed to have been operational now, handling 890 million transactions a year, but it will not be running fully until 2000. So far the system has only been installed in 300 Post Offices and is being tested with only 150,000 of the country's 19 million claimants. The projected fraud savings have been factored into the Department of Social Security's existing budgets. The delay in introducing the system has left a large hole in those departmental budgets.

ICL Pathway, the ICL subsidiary running the project, has spent £125m installing equipment and training staff. Its total spend by the time the system is up and running is expected to reach £600m. It will earn revenues, estimated at between £1bn and £1.5bn, by charging a royalty every time a card is used to make a benefit payment.

A leaked memo from Ms Harman to the President of the Board of Trade, Margaret Beckett, written last month, disclosed that ICL was seeking "significantly more money" to complete the project. This would put the department under "financial and contractual pressure". ICL executives have denied that they are seeking to renegotiate the terms of the contract and insist that the project remains on course.

However, there are doubts about whether the Government wants to continue with the project at all, which was awarded by the previous Social Security Secretary, Peter Lilley. The Government's Social Exclusion Unit, launched last autumn by Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio, is putting pressure on high-street banks to make bank accounts available to everyone.

If this happened, social security benefits of all types could be paid straight into bank accounts by direct debit, making the expensive computerised ICL system redundant. A Post Office executive said: "There is clearly a problem between the DSS and the Treasury. But the bigger issue is whether the current government is committed to the project. The last one was and we are still waiting to see whether this one is."

The system is initially intended to eliminate encashment fraud through the use of stolen order books. But ICL believes that ultimately it could be used much more widely in the bigger battle against entitlement fraud, which is estimated to cost £4bn a year.

The smart benefit cards would allow the Benefits Agency to keep sophisticated records of where and when benefits are paid up and down the country, so helping to detect patterns of fraudulent claims.

Tim Waterstone near to winning back booksellers

WH SMITH is set to complete today the sale of its Waterstone's bookselling business to HMV Media, the new company headed by Tim Waterstone. The £300m deal will pave the way for Smith's to return around £200m to shareholders. An announcement on the cash return is expected in the next few weeks. The completion of the Waterstone's deal will trigger a £607,000 payment to Alan Giles, who runs the Waterstone's chain.

Bid for Savoy to top £500m

BLACKSTONE, the American investment group, is expected to table a firm £500m-plus bid for the Savoy in the next few weeks and has emerged as front-runner to acquire the luxury hotels group. Medhurst, the US real estate group, is understood to have dropped out of the race. There are also doubts about a bid from Starwood Lodging which will be hit by the US Congress' decision to clamp down on a tax loophole.

Germans eye Hepworth

SPECULATION is mounting that Vaillant, a family-owned German boiler maker, could launch a £650m-plus bid for Hepworth, the troubled building materials group. United Technology, a US group, could also be tempted to enter the fray. Jean-François Chene, Hepworth's new chief executive, is expected to unveil a shake-up of the group when he announces annual results tomorrow.

Firms to recruit more

THE DEMAND for staff will rise across the country in the second quarter of 1998, particularly in consumer-led industries, according to the Manpower Quarterly Survey of Employment Prospects. The survey predicts the highest balance of companies planning to increase recruitment against those planning to shed workers for nine years. A separate survey on job creation in small businesses found new jobs fell by 10 per cent in the first quarter with only 18 per cent of those surveyed creating new jobs during that period.

BMW poised to take Rolls

By John Willcock

SPECULATION mounted over the weekend that Rolls-Royce Motors is to fall into BMW's hands this week, spurred by a report in the German news magazine Focus on Saturday.

Vickers has been in talks with BMW and Volkswagen over the sale of its luxury car maker, with analysts pencilling in a selling price of £300m-£400m. Other bidders include the venture capital outfit Doughty Hanson and UK businessman Kevin Morley, a former director of Rover Group, although sources close to the talks have discounted their chances of success.

The German magazine cited BMW's existing relationship with the British company as helping its cause. BMW has a joint venture with the aero engine side of Rolls-Royce, which split from the car maker 25 years ago, and supplies Vickers with engines for the Silver Seraph, the latest model introduced by the Rolls-Royce car makers.

The decision by Sir Colin

Chandler, Vickers' chairman, to put up the car maker for auction initially drew criticism from BMW, but may still prompt a higher offer from Volkswagen.

The aero-engine group which still owns the Rolls-Royce name has an effective veto over any sale of the car maker, and is known to favour the BMW bid. Daimler-Benz, the German industrial group and maker of Mercedes-Benz, has pulled out of the auction and is thinking of launching its own super-luxury brand.

"German car companies

think they have to be active in the luxury or super-luxury segment. They have to break into this through Rolls-Royce or (its sister brand) Bentley before they will develop their own models," Sabine Blumel at IMI Sigeo said last week.

"VW could try to outbid BMW and it could be that VW would be more attractive if it does ask Vickers to supply the engines. I personally think VW could do more with Rolls-Royce than BMW, but, from the point of view of Rolls-Royce, it might be nicer to be owned by BMW."

Brown's quiet tax on fat cats

By Andrew Verity

THE Government has slapped an 11 per cent tax hike on more than 2,000 pensions of highly-paid senior executives - despite no explicit mention of the move in the Budget.

The Inland Revenue has confirmed that Budget changes to the taxation of trusts would boost capital gains tax on "top-up" pensions paid to senior employees from 23 to 34 per cent.

Accountants are sharply criticising the Government for failing to include explicit mention of the tax increase in any of the press releases put out when Gordon Brown made his Budget speech two weeks ago. Some

say the move was a surreptitious tax raid on the wealthy.

The top-up pensions, known as funded unapproved retirement benefit schemes (Furbs), are used by employees earning more than the Revenue's cap on earnings which qualify for tax relief, currently £87,600.

The schemes are increasingly used as a tax-efficient way to reward senior employees approaching retirement. Companies pay tax at 40 per cent when they make contributions into these special pensions. But until now they have enjoyed a preferential rate of CGT of 23 per cent on the growth of the funds, rather than the higher rate of 34 per cent. Payouts from

the pensions are tax-free.

Information released on Budget Day made no mention of Furbs but did change the law to levy capital gains tax at 34 per cent on all trusts. Until now, Furbs, a particular type of trust, enjoyed exemptions from the higher rate of CGT.

While no exact figures are available, accountants estimate that more than 2,000 people use the arrangements. Most are highly paid executives at the country's top 350 companies and earn well into six figures.

The accountants KPMG say companies will have to increase contributions rapidly for senior employees in order to make up for the change.

Mary Carter, remuneration

tax partner at KPMG, said: "Companies will need to review urgently the rate at which their contributions are made and consider increasing this rate to avoid employees being very materially disadvantaged."

The schemes have grown in popularity as executive pay rises have raced ahead of inflation. Because the earnings cap only rises in line with the retail price index, increasing numbers of employees now earn more than the cap.

KPMG calculates that a 44-year-old employee, whose company contributed £15,000 a year until retirement at 60, can now expect £48,000 less to retire on.

Telewest set for General Cable deal

By John Willcock

TELEWEST Communications is close to completing an agreed £666m acquisition of General Cable, in a further step towards the consolidation of the British cable industry.

Telewest announced yesterday that "merger discussions between the two companies are at an advanced stage, which may result in a recommended offer being made." General Cable said it would "recommend the proposed offer if made."

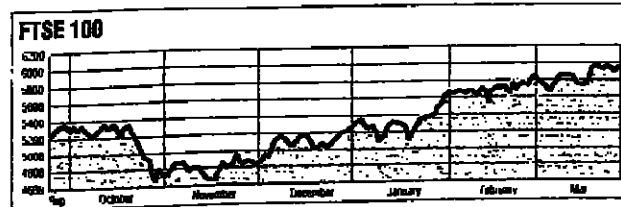
The cash and shares offer ends months of speculation about General Cable's fate. UK rival Cable & Wireless Communications merged with a number of UK cable compa-

nies last year, leaving Telewest, General Cable and NTL as the remaining independent players.

Analysts said the Telewest deal would put it back in a market leading position, and leave NTL still needing a merger partner of its own.

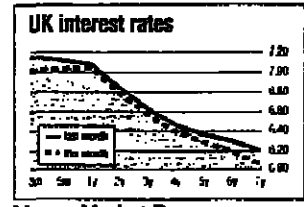
Stephen Davidson, chief executive of Telewest, said: "This is a crucial step in development of the industry and puts Telewest back in position. We are the natural partner for these businesses." Telewest said General Cable's 40 per cent shareholder General Utilities Holdings, a unit of French group Compagnie Generale des Eaux, had agreed to an offer pitched at 1,243 new Telewest shares and 65p in cash for every General Cable share.

STOCK MARKETS

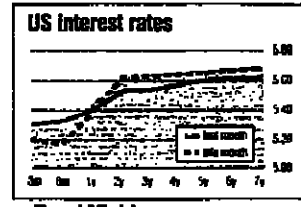


Indices	Close	Wk's chg	Wk's chg %	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield %
London	5939.30	-17.00	-0.29	6105.6	4188.1	3.428
FTSE 100	5939.30	-17.00	-0.29	6105.6	4188.1	3.428
FTSE 250	5533.20	-12.20	-0.22	5644.4	4384.2	3.051
FTSE 350	2855.80	-5.00	-0.18	2917.7	2075.7	3.357
FTSE All Share	2785.44	-2.58	-0.09	2838.77	2056.07	3.331
FTSE Realindex	2857.50	-30.00	-1.06	2851.4	2182.1	2.942
FTSE SmallCap	1415.30	-10.20	-0.73	1414.3	1225.2	3.213
FTSE AIM	1051.30	-10.80	-1.03	1109.3	865.9	1.055
Dow Jones	8796.08	-110.35	-1.24	8959.24	6356.78	1.591
Nikkei	16739.26	-91.21	-0.54	20910.79	14488.21	0.961
Hang Seng	11735.50	-171.27	-1.48	15820.31	7903.13	3.425
Dax	5083.16	-81.61	-1.63	5100.19	5192.38	1.586

INTEREST RATES

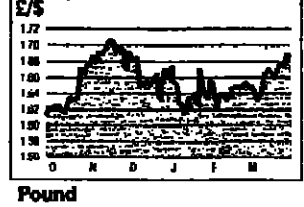


Money Market Rates	3 month	1 yr	1 yr	1 yr	1 yr	1 yr
UK	7.50	1.18	7.50	0.59	5.93	1.70
US	5.69	-0.08	5.68	-0.40	5.68	-1.22
Japan	0.75	0.17	0.70	-0.01	1.90	-0.65
Germany	3.55	0.30	3.81	0.39	4.90	-1.04

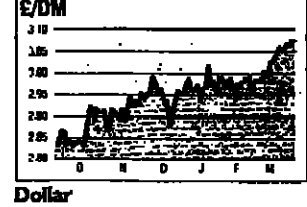


Bond Yields	10 yr	1 yr	1 yr	1 yr	1 yr	1 yr
Next	535.00	-170.00	-24.11			
Cable Telecom	1320.00	-250.00	-15.92			
Micro Focus	572.50	-70.00	-10.89			
DPS Furniture	348.50	-41.50	-10.64			

CURRENCIES



Other Indicators	Close	Wk's chg	Wk's chg %	1 yr	1 yr	1 yr
Dollar	1.6827	+1.72c	+0.10	1.6310		
D-Mark	3.0773	+2.31p	+0.76	2.7341		
Yen	219.28	+¥1.87	+0.86	202.22		
£ Index	108.30	+0.90	+0.83	98.00		



Other Indicators	Close	Wk's chg	Wk's chg %	1 yr	1 yr	1 yr
Brent Oil (\$)	14.91	-2.26	-15.18			
Gold (\$)	302.65	-11.10	-3.64	348.15		
Silver (\$)	6.38	-0.44	-6.43	6.38		
B-30 Rates	7.25			6.00		

A message to up
to 250 people
with just one call?

Call Orange Direct Business Sales

0800 731 3330

orange

0800 731 3330



GAVYN DAVIES
ON TREASURY
HINTS IN FAVOUR
OF TIGHTENING
AND HOW
HIS REMARKS
TO THE SELECT
COMMITTEE
WERE
MISINTERPRETED

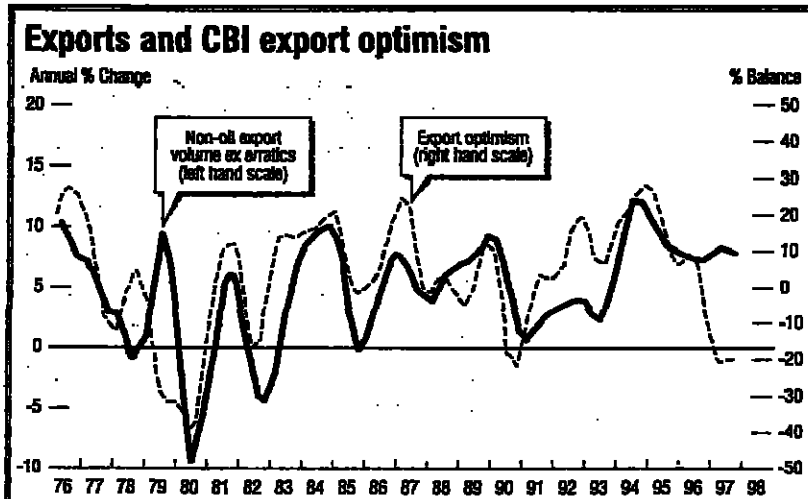
Teething troubles for the new money team

WHEN the Chancellor gave the Bank of England operational independence in the setting of interest rate policy on 6 May last year, one common criticism of the new regime was that it would make the co-ordination of fiscal and monetary policy more difficult.

Previously, all of the key decisions relating to economic management were in the hands of the Treasury, so there was simply no one else to blame when things went wrong. Now, even if there is no technical reason why co-ordination between the Bank and Treasury should prove problematic, it is only human nature that each of these institutions should seek to establish that it is the fault of the other if the economy is mismanaged.

In giving evidence to the Treasury Select Committee last week, Tim Congdon and I were faced with a series of questions which essentially amounted to an attempt to apportion blame between the Treasury and the Bank if the economic cycle should run off the rails in the next year or two. Since both of us happen to believe at the moment that domestic monetary policy should have been tightened more aggressively in the past two years – and especially from mid 1996 mid 1997 – this was interpreted in one of our more sensationalist national newspapers as a direct attack on the Governor. This is an absurdity, and I would now like to set the record straight.

Few people would contend today that policy has been optimal in the past two years, since at the very least the economy finds itself in a highly unbalanced state in the spring of 1998. But even with the considerable benefit of hindsight it is far from clear how matters could have been improved. Some observers (the City consensus) believe that fiscal policy



should have been tightened much more markedly in order to take the pressure off base rates and sterling. Others (like Congdon and myself) reckon that fiscal policy actually was tightened very substantially, and that an earlier and more decisive tightening in base rates would have killed the excess growth in domestic demand and thus dampened the rise in the exchange rate. A further group (centred around Ken Clarke) contends that no policy tightening was in fact necessary, since no inflation risk has become apparent, and that the problem with sterling has developed because base rates have risen too much, not too little.

The fact that this debate can still be raging about 18 months after many of the key decisions were actually taken graphically illustrates how difficult it is to set economic policy in the real world. As Eddie George says, the best economists are those who know how little they know, and this principle should be applied to

policy post-mortems as much as to anything else. Nevertheless, our new macro-framework in the UK is intended to increase openness and accountability, and we will never get anywhere unless we attempt to learn from past experience. So here goes.

Two years ago, there was an overwhelming consensus among British policy-makers that the one thing that must never be allowed to happen again was to allow domestic monetary policy to remain too loose as the upswing of an economic cycle gathered momentum. This was seen (rightly) as the cardinal sin of the late 1980s, and all of the officials who were even tangentially involved in this episode vowed that it could be repeated only over their dead bodies. The exemplary monetary tightening undertaken in late 1994 was implemented with exactly this in mind, and it was a remarkable success. Yet the puzzling aspect of the past two years has been how little

base rates have risen in the face of an intense and prolonged consumer boom.

Three entirely separate regimes have been in command of interest policy over this period. Funny enough, all three have leaned to a dovish direction when they have actually been in control of the decision themselves, while at least two of them have been more hawkish for the remainder of the time.

In the run-up to the election, Ken Clarke rejected the repeated advice of the Governor to raise base rates faster than his electoral instincts allowed him to do. The Governor was clearly right about this, and many of our subsequent headaches stem from the fact that his advice was rejected. Then, when Gordon Brown was in control of base rates for a fleeting period, he opted to raise rates by only a quarter point on 6 May, when some were arguing the case for moving by at least a half point. Finally, the new Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank unanimously chose to raise rates very gradually last summer (and actually to announce a rate "freeze" last August) despite overwhelming evidence of a rampant consumer boom. In all of these episodes, the strength of sterling was given as the main reason for caution on base rates (and as the graph shows this is now seriously denting the export sector) but the upshot has been that the consumer sector has never really been stopped in its tracks, and this has left the economy in today's unbalanced condition.

The key question is how policy could have been adjusted last year to have brought sterling down more quickly. In order to answer this question, it would help to have a model which could explain the rise in sterling in the first place, but the Bank's best efforts in this direction have concluded that about seven-eighths

of the appreciation cannot be explained by monetary or other measurable factors. This means that we are inevitably in the realm of conjecture when we argue about whether a tighter fiscal stance, or a more decisive increase in base rates, would have led to an earlier peak in the exchange rate. My own conjecture is that the only thing that would have affected sterling would have been a slowdown in domestic demand – and that the only thing powerful enough to have quashed the growth in demand would have been considerably tighter domestic money. But the truth is that we shall never really know.

What we do know, however, is that the Treasury is giving some very aggressive hints to the Bank that monetary policy is still too loose. When Gordon Brown set the Bank free last year, he instructed them to achieve the Government's inflation objective and "without prejudice to this objective, to support the Government's economic policy, including its objectives for growth and employment". This perhaps allowed some wriggling room for the Bank in interpreting the precise meaning of the inflation objective, at least in terms of timing.

It now appears that the Treasury wants to tighten matters up. In the 1998 Budget, the Treasury simply says: "The inflation target is 2.5 per cent at all times: that is the rate which the MPC is required to achieve and for which it is accountable... Inflation has so far been above the target rate most months. The effort and vigilance required to maintain low inflation should not be underestimated."

In other words: base rates need to go up; get on with it; and remember who said what to whom if inflation should rise in the years ahead.

Was Major's legacy greater equality?

By David Walker

THE TORY right wing now has a new charge to lay at John Major's door – the former Prime Minister is unmasked today as an egalitarian.

According to a new analysis of income distribution, the Major era from 1992-97 was marked by a dramatic shift in the tendency to growing inequality shown during the Thatcher years. Under him, Britain became more equal in terms of incomes. Updating previous work carried out for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation up to 1995, Professor John Hills of the London School of Economics suggests several reasons for Major era egalitarianism, most accidental.

People on the lowest incomes made up ground in the Nineties thanks to the end of the Poll Tax, which was remarkably regressive, and to falling unemployment. Relatively slow growth in incomes for higher earners had its effect, too, along with higher tax burdens for them.

Because real earnings grew little after 1992, the fact that benefits were linked to prices rather than earnings did not increase inequality as it had in the later 1980s, when earnings ballooned.

Paradoxically, the factors which seem to have done for the Tories – a sense of economic malaise despite growing employment – seem to have worked to make income distribution more equal.

Professor Hills even opens the possibility that the unwelcome success of Major in reducing inequality may turn out to be more dramatic than under Labour, which has – vaguely expressed – ambitions to cut inequality. "It is not clear whether these trends towards greater equality will be sustained for long enough – maybe more than a decade – to reverse the previous, rapid growth in inequality," Professor Hills says.

But the halting of Thatcher-era trends towards greater inequality does show that the pressures for inequality "are not inexorable as does the difference in outcome of similar pressures in other countries". Between 1979 and 1995 average

incomes grew by about 40 per cent but for the richest 10th of the population they grew by over 60 per cent. For the poorest 10th, income growth was only about 10 per cent. The result of Thatcherism was that by the early Nineties, income inequality was greater than at any time since the 1940s. Thatcherism did not, however, have much impact on the distribution of wealth, whether or the "marketable" kind (saleable assets such as shares or housing) or wealth including non-tradeable pension rights. Britain was and remains highly unequal with the richest 1 per cent owning a fifth of all marketable wealth. Professor Hills wants the Government to publish an annual Poverty Report based on a basket of indicators allowing the Government to set targets, for example, for its policies on social exclusion. "Future numbers with relatively low incomes could reflect a race between the positive effects of measures to increase incomes from work at the bottom, and the negative effects of falling relative incomes for those remaining largely dependent on benefits."

Professor Hills's data confirm that the poor are not a constant group – the poor in any one year are not necessarily poor the next. But the number of permanent "escapees" from poverty are few.

* 'Income and wealth. The latest evidence', Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The style slowcoaches will fall before mighty Marks

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

CLOTHING retailers are facing a shake-out as the most powerful names such as Marks & Spencer increase their grip on the high street. A survey published today by Verdict, the retail consultants, predicts the collapse of more high street retailers if they do not have a distinctive brand and a definite proposition, whether it is quality, design or price.

"We predict that M&S is going to increase its share of the UK clothing market by 4 per cent over the next few years and that share is going to have to come from somewhere," says Verdict's Clive Vaughan. Most

at risk are fashion stores that are "playing it safe" with undistinguished merchandise, the report says. Others who cut costs in customer service and supplying chain operations also risk alienating shoppers.

Verdict says the collapse of Foster's menswear into administration underlined the problems. Last week's profits warning from Next, for so long a star, showed how unforgiving shoppers are, it added. "With consumer spending growth going to be unexciting over the next couple of years, you are going to have to be distinctive to prosper," Mr Vaughan said.

The report identifies two ways to compete with M&S, which now accounts for 15 per

cent of the UK's £24.6bn clothing market. One is to be more fashionable but with distinctive styling as Monsoon, Next, Oasis and Kookai are. Another is to focus on "aspirational" brands which it says are becoming increasingly important. The report identifies small chains such as USC, Envy and Blakes as following that strategy.

Retailers that have been caught in the middle include Fosters, Littlewoods, Laura Ashley and Etam. Those that have continued to expand include Monsoon and New Look. However, the report cautions against the dangers of expanding too rapidly and placing too much pressure on systems and supply chains.

TEL: 0171 293 2222

BUSINESS TO BUSINESS

FAX: 0171 293 2505

Opportunities

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITY

AGENTS WANTED

MORTGAGES, COMMERCIAL FINANCE, OFF SHORE BANKING AND CAR FINANCE

- WE SPECIALISE IN REDUCING THE INTEREST OUR CLIENTS PAY.
- WE ASSIST CLIENTS WHO HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN DECLINED
- WE PROVIDE OUR AGENTS WITH LEADS TO ACQUIRE NEW CLIENTS

SALES AGENCY: £950.00 + VAT
MANAGEMENT SALES AGENCY: £2020.00

TAKE THE NEXT STEP AND ATTEND OUR NATIONAL BUSINESS PRESENTATION

CONTACT SHARON
TEL: 0161 661 7771
CARTEL MARKETING LTD

Services

What happens to the phones when you leave your office?

Make our office your office. For personal call answering and other ways to grow your business.

messagemail
0800 376 0044

Services

Make BIG SAVINGS on international 'phone calls

Unicom
FreePhone Access number for all calls
Quality service from a well established company
Worldwide rates - including UK
No rentals or joining fees

INDIA	39p	46p
CANADA	8p	10p
SWEDEN	9p	12p
AUSTRALIA	13p	21p
JAPAN	17p	17p
NEW ZEALAND	15p	26p
HONG KONG	23p	26p

FreePhone Customer Services for more information or to open an account immediately:
0800 496 496 3

Mobile Phones

LAST CHANCE FOR FREE

ERICSSON PF768

LEXUS PRICE NOW ONLY

£99.99 INCLUDING VAT

UPGRADE PRICE £175.00

On the One 2 One Network

ALL CONNECTIONS ARE SUBJECT TO STATUS AND CONNECTION CHARGES

Call Your Nearest Branch of
LEXUS TELECOM
GSM SPECIALISTS FOR EXPORT & MAIL ORDERS

Wembley, Sudbury, Kilburn & Shepherd's Bush
Mastercard Call: 0181-900-1447 Visa

Probably the most profitable business opportunity in the U.K. for only £9,600 + VAT

MUSIC WORLD supply retailers with quality music cassettes & CDs at half the normal retail price. You will receive 80 plus outlets, fully stocked with a wide range of artists & titles, which can earn you tremendous income, for only 2 days work a week.

Phone for information pack
01223 327287

Franchises

PINEAPPLE PARK GREETINGS CARDS

Are established franchisees offering exclusive distribution rights for one of the UK's leading card or stationery companies.

Franchisees have the benefit of an excellent, progressive product, full training and back-up from a multi and experienced office team.

Investment level £2,500 - £25,000.
Contact: Peter Goodwin
Pineapple Park Ltd
21 Keston Place, Welling Way
Barnet, Herts. EN4 8JY
Tel: (01462) 442021

NOTICE TO READERS

What we take reasonable precautions with all advertisements, readers are strongly advised to take professional advice before paying a deposit or entering into any financial commitment.

Opportunities

LIQUIDATIONS

RECOVERIES

20+ Liquidations & Recoveries. Based on work, not on debt. We can recover 100% of your debt.

RECOVERIES FOR SALE

Monthly fee of over 1000 different. 100% recovery. 100% recovery.

CONTACT
Tel 01652 69889
Fax 01652 69867

Computers/Services

PowerBook Central

PowerBook 150 series from £299. PowerBook Duo series from £199. PowerBook 240 series from £499. PowerBook 250 series from £499. PowerBook 260 series from £499.

PowerBook 150 series from £299

PowerBook Duo series from £199

PowerBook 240 series from £499

PowerBook 250 series from £499

PowerBook 260 series from £499

Small to Medium Sized Manufacturing/Service Companies

Required to complement existing groups.

Interested parties should send a CV and cover letter to:

SEARCH
Tel: 0171 491 2254
Mobile: 0411 374808

Communications 2000

USA	5p
Australia	12p
Brazil	39p
Canada	12p
France	15p
Germany	15p
India	39p
Japan	22p
Kenya	45p
Malaysia	29p
South Africa	35p

24 hour access
Use any touch tone phone
Dedicated call centre
Free paid service

For Customer Services 0181 537 0000

0800 634 2000

Franchises

Long Term, High Income, Franchise Opportunities

4-year test market now completed. Proven product (No Competition) Start, retail value £2000. Full training & launch programme. Exclusive Area (Guaranteed). Full marketing support, mailing etc. Low investment from £2000 + vat. For free information pack, call DSI Ltd.
Tel: 01432 873 828 Fax: 01432 871 925.

Conferences

DEVELOP YOUR MARKETS IN THE U.S.A.

IBDN™ GLOBAL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION AND FLEET BANK

ONE DAY CONFERENCE

WITH DISTINGUISHED PANEL OF SPEAKERS INCLUDING:
Roger Needham, M.D., Microsoft Research Labs
1st APRIL 1998 - ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB
Additional Speakers from D.T.I., Merrill Lynch, 3i Plc, Towers Perrin and Representatives from American States

MARKETING, BANKING AND STATE INCENTIVE PROGRAMMES
£385 inc. Lunch, Reception and Copies of Presentations
Tel: 0181 780 9292 Website: www.global-business.org

STRONGEST IN THE SOUTH

PRIVATE CLIENT Surrey To c.£25,000
Excellent opportunity for 1-2 year PQE to consolidate their experience in this well established provincial practice. Loyal clientele and existing varied caseload. Strong technical skills preferred to with full range of Probate, Wills, Trusts and Private Tax (CGT and IHT). Contact Paul Carnegie.

COMM PROP East Sussex £Excellent
Senior commercial property position for 5 year+PQE within Property Business Group of this leading Provincial practice. Working on a quality caseload for major clients. Good managerial and marketing skills preferred. Genuine opportunity for advancement. Contact Paul Carnegie.

CORP/COMM Hants To c.£50,000
Experienced corporate and commercial lawyer required for leading national practice. This is a newly created position due to the level of work being generated by the southern corporate team. A quality and diverse caseload. Good academics and City experience preferred. Contact Paul Carnegie.

IP/IT Hants To c.£50,000
Exciting prospect for 3-5 year PQE, commercially aware IP/IT specialist. Leading provincial practice with extremely progressive outlook and quality caseload. Drive and personality required to market their IP/IT development plans. Genuine opportunity, for the right candidate, to make real impact. Contact Paul Carnegie.

HOUSING/DEVELOPMENT West London To c.£36,000
Highly renowned unit, extremely well-known for the expertise and professionalism of its acclaimed Senior Partner has created exciting role for young property development lawyer c1-3 yrs with potential. Unique opportunity for junior solicitor to establish themselves in this lucrative area. Call Clio Demetriades.

RES. CONVEYANCING SW London To c.£24,000
Friendly practice, located in fashionable part of London, has created suitable role for experienced domestic conveyancer to handle valuable and growing caseload. Plenty of encouragement to develop contacts with local property agents. Call Clio Demetriades.

FAMILY LAW Hants/Sussex To c.£23,000
Medium-sized, Franchised general practice has created new role for junior Family Law specialist to develop busy unit in all aspects of divorce/childcare. Clientele includes both Private and Legal Aid and you can expect good prospects of Partnership. Call Clio Demetriades.

COMM CONTRACTS Surrey To c.£25,000
Bright and ambitious commercial lawyer is sought for highly profitable and well-run department, acting for both institutional and commercial clients. With full back-up and encouragement to get involved in client meetings as well as business advice, this provides the ideal post from which a 2-4 PQE solicitor may develop as a full business lawyer. Call Clio Demetriades.

COMM PROPERTY Norfolk £Partner Designate
A great opportunity exists within this prestigious firm's strong and successful commercial property department for a senior property solicitor from a recognised City/regional practice. The appointee will be expected to have good metropolitan experience and an ability to further develop our client's share of the market. Definite partnership prospects. Please call Richard Morgan.

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY East Anglia £Premium
A move to this leading commercial practice will prove to be very rewarding for a young high flying professional indemnity solicitor. The successful applicant will be from a recognised commercial stable and have relevant post qualified experience in this area of work. Commercial outlook essential. Definite partnership path. Please call Richard Morgan.

COMM LITIGATION Norfolk £Attractive
Commercial progressive practice seeks impressive newly qualified solicitor to undertake insolvency related litigation. Strong departmental team and excellent support provided. Attractive working environment. Please call Richard Morgan.

MATRIMONIAL/CIVIL NE London To c.£28,000
Experienced litigation solicitor is required by this busy practice. The workload has a matrimonial bias combined with general civil litigation including landlord and tenant matters. Great importance is attached to personality and the ability to effectively handle a demanding clientele. Please call Richard Morgan.

COMM/COMM PROPERTY Bath To c.£45,000
Large reputable firm requires a senior lawyer for their Business and Commercial Property Units. Covering a broad spectrum of work, clients include charities and education and commercial property specialists. Good marketing skills and a sense of humour are essential. Contact Sophie Malin.

COMM LITIGATION South Coast To c.£30,000
Highly respected firm seeks a litigator to join this busy department. Wide variety of work with particular emphasis on property and construction litigation and IP matters. Excellent prospects. Contact Sophie Malin.

TAX AND TRUSTS Surrey To c.£50,000
Leading national commercial and tax law firm with a growing reputation for its international work is looking to recruit a senior lawyer. The department services a strong base of high-net-worth clients, undertakes international tax planning, trust management, tax compliance and probate work. Contact Sophie Malin.

PERSONAL INJURY Devon To c.£30,000
Leading personal injury practice requires a Plaintiff Personal Injury Solicitor/legal executive with up to 4 years PQE. Must be able to develop and handle their own caseload. Rewarding work with excellent prospects. Contact Sophie Malin.

COMM LITIGATION Devon To c.£37,000
Partner designate or Associate level post, working alongside and providing support to prestigious corporate department has been created for ambitious heavyweight litigator of 5-7 PQE. Enjoy acting for an impressive range of commercial clients, including household names, within a modern and progressive Partnership. Call Simon Scott.

MARINE LITIGATION Plymouth To c.£32,000
Wet/Dry litigation mix for renowned department of major provincial firm is available to talented shipping litigator of 2-4 yrs PQE. With prospects to attain Partnership early on you must display sufficient ambition and skills to merit fast-track promotion. City environment; good benefits package. Call Simon Scott.

PERSONAL INJURY Bristol To c.£28,000
Prestigious department within highly supportive firm, generally considered to be at the cutting edge of developments in Personal Injury practice, offers opportunity to client-oriented PI expert of 1-3 yrs PQE. At this level you will benefit from the expert coaching which is available within a high-powered unit. Call Simon Scott.

BANKING LITIGATION Devon To c.£32,000
Large, varied, heavyweight caseload in secured/unsecured loans, securities, recoveries, enforcement and insolvencies is available to Banking Litigator of c2-4 yrs PQE who seeks the enhanced quality of life which is available in the countryside, without loss of quality of work or status. With London or other city-centre training you should swiftly aim for Partnership. Call Simon Scott.

DOMESTIC PROPERTY Cornwall To c.£25,000
Leading South West firm requires an ambitious and enthusiastic solicitor/executive to take on and develop an existing caseload. Based at a thriving branch office, you will benefit from an element of autonomy and a quality client-base. Contact Bridget Levin.

PERSONAL INJURY Devon Package To £30,000
Respected regional practice seeks a solicitor/executive for a full Plaintiff caseload. Suit technically skilled lawyers with an interest in marketing. Membership of the Personal Injury Panel a distinct advantage. Contact Bridget Levin.

PARTNER DESIGNATE West Cornwall Package To £50,000
City Life? ... Get a Life!
Our client, a Leading Commercial practice based in Cornwall, seeks a dynamic individual to steer its Commercial Department into the Millennium. Contact Bridget Levin.

TAX TRUSTS Bristol To c.£45,000
Senior solicitor sought by this Leading Commercial firm based in Bristol. Responsible for a quality caseload acting for both Corporate entities and private individuals, this position has Partnership Prospects. Contact Bridget Levin.

Legal Opportunities

No. 87 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1BD. Tel: 0171 404 9966 Fax: 0171 404 9955

HILLMAN saunders

CORPORATE **PROPERTY**
The mark of a good firm is an impressive client list that provides a continuous supply of significant deals. Many firms boast about their client list, some just get on with the job. A vacancy exists with a leading City firm, the corporate solicitors practice that is not prone to excessive firm provides a full formal structured glowing, but has one of the best ranges of excellent on-the-job training and quality clients of City Solicitors. This is a rare opportunity. (Ref 15990)

CORPORATE PROPERTY

BC4 1-4 yrs' pge to £55,000 BC4 NO-2 yrs' pge to £45,000
Two vacancies exist with one of the leading City firms. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the corporate solicitors practice. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the corporate solicitors practice. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the corporate solicitors practice. (Ref 15990)

Opportunities with... BOROUGH SECRETARIAT & LEGAL SERVICES

TRAINEE SOLICITOR for September 1998 (Two years fixed term)

Starting salary: £18,795 (inclusive of London Weighting - subject to annual local government pay award; and increments in April 1999 and April 2000)

Harrow Legal Services ("HLS") is the small in-house team which provides all of Harrow Council's legal services. We offer a friendly working environment where the emphasis is on quality, flexibility and team working. We are committed to achieving Investors in People accreditation and to the Government's Best Value objectives.

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates seeking a training contract commencing in September 1998.

We offer the opportunity to gain valuable experience across the full range of legal work in a Local Authority. Under the supervision of senior solicitors you will take responsibility for your own caseload including conveyancing, contracts, civil and criminal litigation, town planning, advocacy, social services and housing law as well as research.

The successful candidate will probably have a 1st class or upper second class degree and have successfully completed the Law Society's Legal Practice Course preferably with a commendation or distinction (or be expected to do so by their tutor if currently taking the LPC) and will be able to demonstrate the potential to mature rapidly into a fully competent local government lawyer.

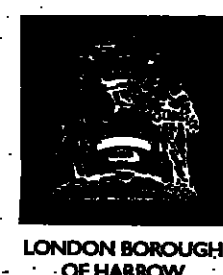
Excellent written and verbal communication skills, a willingness to learn and the ability to contribute to the high quality standards Harrow Legal Services has set itself are essential attributes.

The closing date for receipt of applications is 9th April 1998. Please note that we will only consider fully completed application forms (no CVs, thank you). Interviews are likely to take place in the week commencing 20th April; but this date may change.

Applications are especially welcomed from people with disabilities, members of black and other ethnic minority communities and women as they are under represented at this level within the Authority.

For an application form and information pack, contact the Personnel Office, P.O. Box 57, Civic Centre, Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2XF. Telephone 0181 424 1017 (answerphone outside office hours).

An Equal Opportunities Employer



saunders

CORPORATE **PROPERTY**
The mark of a good firm is an impressive client list that provides a continuous supply of significant deals. Many firms boast about their client list, some just get on with the job. A vacancy exists with a leading City firm, the corporate solicitors practice that is not prone to excessive firm provides a full formal structured glowing, but has one of the best ranges of excellent on-the-job training and quality clients of City Solicitors. This is a rare opportunity. (Ref 15990)

BYGOTT BIGGS

LEGAL RECRUITMENT

YOU'LL APPRECIATE THE DIFFERENCE

Contact either Jane Biggs on 0115 948 0084 (evening) or 01777 248 663. Write to them at Bygott Biggs, Nottingham NG1 5DU. Call 0115 948 0085.



To advertise in this section please call Albert Blackburn on 0171 293 2311 or Isobel Clift on 0171 293 2272.

PROPERTY LAWYER

CENTRAL LONDON

An established and well respected Trade Union firm, Pattinson and Brewer are looking for an energetic and quality driven 2/3 years qualified solicitor to support the conveyancing partner in a busy and expanding department.

The successful candidate will be capable of demonstrating excellent skills in all aspects of conveyancing including commercial, domestic and landlord and tenant.

Will drafting experience will be an advantage and IT skills are essential.



Please apply with C.V. to:
Penny Stewart
Pattinson & Brewer
30 Great James Street
London WC1N 3HA

Justice will be done

In just a year, the Criminal Cases Review Commission is beginning to convince defence solicitors that it means business. Grania Langdon-Down reports

"THEY ACTUALLY talk to us. They ring us up and discuss details of cases we have sent them. They even come to meet us." A year after the Criminal Cases Review Commission began work investigating potential miscarriages of justice, the note of disbelief in the voices of defence solicitors and other campaigners is still marked.

The commission got off to a flying start, referring the cases of Danny MacNamee, jailed in 1987 for conspiracy to cause the Hyde Park bombings, Mahmood Mattan, the Somali sailor hanged in 1952 for murdering a Cardiff shopkeeper, and Derek Bentley, hanged in 1953, back to the Court of Appeal within eight months of starting work. In February, the first of the commission's referrals to come before the Court of Appeal led to the quashing of Mr Mattan's conviction.

After years of struggling with the Home Office's C3 department, which was responsible for reviewing suspected miscarriages until March last year, it is the contrast in style between the two that prompts most comment from solicitors.

Jim Nichol, who represented the Bridgewater Three, is dealing with the commission over the M25 case, where three men were jailed for life in 1990 for murder and other crimes in and around Surrey. He says it is too early to judge whether the commission will produce the right results. However, he believes it is open to ideas and, on that level, is "incomparably better" than the Home Office.

Razia Karim, legal officer for campaign group Justice agrees. "In the past, you sent a case to the Home Office and it was like a black hole. You heard nothing for years and were then told yes or no. The commission will tell you the name of the person reviewing the case. They are very willing to discuss ideas and to come down to London to meet us."

One of Justice's cases dealt with by the Commission involved Mary Druhan, who was sentenced to life in 1989 for a double murder. Justice petitioned the Home Office for an appeal in 1993, which was considering rejecting the case when, last year, it was transferred to the commission. After a nine-month investigation, the commission decided to refer Ms Druhan's

case to the Court of Appeal. "I was pleased with their approach. It was very different to the Home Office, given that nothing substantially new had happened," says Ms Karim.

However, Justice was concerned about a backlog of cases building up - new cases are still waiting to be allocated a case-worker six months after being submitted. Apart from the 272 cases that were transferred from the Home Office - which arrived in the "most dreadful state", according to one of the commissioners - the commission took on 12 from the Northern Ireland Office. Of these 284 cases, 193 are still open.

New cases come in at the rate of four a day, with only one in 10 applicants legally represented. Of the 1,330 applications received by the end of March, 218 were being worked on, leaving 807 still open. The commission has completed 305 cases - referring 12 to the Court of Appeal, refusing 38 and rejecting 255 cases because they did not come within the commission's jurisdiction or were without merit.

The commission's brief, set out in the Criminal Appeal Act 1995, requires it to consider whether there is a "real possibility" that a conviction will be quashed if the case is given a further hearing in the Court of Appeal. For a case to be referred, there has to be an argument or evidence which has not been raised during the trial or at appeal, or exceptional circumstances.

The commission, based in Birmingham, is made up of 14 commissioners and 24 case-workers. Its budget of nearly £6m has been increased to allow it to recruit another 16 case-workers. The commissioners are keen to talk about their role within a criminal justice system that is still trying to rebuild public confidence after a series of devastating miscarriages of justice, including the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four.

Former crown prosecutor Fiona King, who also spent 10 years as a defence solicitor, is a part-time commissioner. She says the commission was the first organisation within the criminal justice system to bring European-style inquisitorial powers to bear on cases.

"A lot of miscarriages stem from our adversarial procedures, where it isn't so



Free at last: Gerry Conlon (above) of the Guildford Four celebrates his release, one of a series of devastating miscarriages of justice Peter Macdiarmid

much a search for the truth of who committed the crime but a search for 'the most likely candidate', she says. "The cases that have come to us fall into groups almost by age. In the 1970s, there were problems over identification. In the 1970s and early 1980s, it was false confessions. After the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, it was disclosure. However, we will need more cases under our belt before we can say this or that needs changing."

The question of what information discovered during its investigation the commission chooses to disclose to an applicant and when it discloses it is something that worries defence lawyers. Section 17 of the 1995 Act gives the commission wide powers to obtain material held by public bodies. It is considering asking the Government to extend that power to cover private organisations.

Commissioner Professor Leonard Leigh, a former law lecturer, is responsible for 11 of the more complicated cases and is overseeing another 15. He says the

commission tends to wait until it has completed its investigations before disclosing material to avoid a "running guerrilla war" with applicants' solicitors.

If the commission decides to refer a

representations will then be followed up.

But many solicitors worry that the Commission is setting too hard a test for cases to win referral to the Court of Appeal. Jane Winter, of campaign group

to the idea of undertaking more training in this field and intends visiting Northern Ireland to meet with people in the legal profession. It has also offered reassurance about the criteria for referrals. "They told us about a number of cases they are intending to refer, which nobody could say are dead certainties."

Another concern is the commission's use of police inquiries into six cases. Professor Leigh says: "Realistically, there isn't anything else we can do. We have an investigations adviser and some of the case-workers have police or legal experience. But in some of the major inquiries, you need a team of seven or eight officers. If we had our own investigators, we'd need about 70 people and no government is going to give you those sorts of resources."

Criminal Cases Review Commission, Alpha Tower, 21-22 Suffolk Street, Queensway, Birmingham B1 1TT (0121 633 1800).

After years of struggling with the Home Office's C3 department, it is the contrast in style between the two that prompts most comment from solicitors

case, it will disclose as much information as possible to the defence and the Crown Prosecution Service. If it decides not to, first it will send a letter to the applicant setting out the preliminary reasons for the decision and any documents, allowing 28 days for comments. Any reasonable rep-

resentation will then be followed up. But many solicitors worry that the Commission is setting too hard a test for cases to win referral to the Court of Appeal. Jane Winter, of campaign group

to the idea of undertaking more training in this field and intends visiting Northern Ireland to meet with people in the legal profession. It has also offered reassurance about the criteria for referrals. "They told us about a number of cases they are intending to refer, which nobody could say are dead certainties."

Muscling in on your move

Ignore conveyancing call-centres at your peril, Nick Hilborne warns solicitors

CONVEYANCING was once the bread and butter of many small, high-street solicitors. The income from it was even used to subsidise the work of other departments. Not any longer. A threat to has emerged in the past year which is potentially more dangerous than furious price-cutting: the arrival of licensed conveyancers or the prospect of rocketing professional indemnity premiums.

In April 1997, Britain's biggest estate agents, Hamro Countrywide, opened its first seven-day conveyancing call-centre in Woking, Surrey. Two national solicitors' firms have followed suit and are experiencing phenomenal rates of growth. Conveyancers know these call-centres will attract a big chunk of the market - but how big?

Shoosmiths & Harrison, a solicitors' firm with offices across the Midlands and South, developed its Property Direct conveyancing operation to work alongside Hamro Countrywide's second call-centre, which opened in Northampton in June 1997. Shoosmiths has been able to offer its services to other clients, most recently Barclays Mortgages.

Graham New, managing partner at Shoosmiths, is anxious to play down the impact of conveyancing call-centres on smaller firms, saying only that the telephone-based approach will gain a "substantial" rather than dominant market share.



House calls: do the conveyancing over the phone

"The philosophy Hamro and the lenders have is not so much to make loads of money as to gain control of the house-buying process," he says. "Direct lenders are becoming more sophisticated in the way they deal with mortgages. Sending out instructions into the traditional fragmented market, they have no control over how quickly and effectively the job is done."

Property Direct is divided into teams of six to eight paralegals, each supervised by a solicitor and working on a shift basis. Mr New claims that it has cut the average time of a

conveyancing operation by up to 50 per cent, to around six to eight weeks. Fees start from £295 for sales or purchases.

Property Direct currently employs 60 to 70 staff, a figure which Mr New aims to double by the end of the year. "Our view is that this is the future of conveyancing," he says. "Not everyone will instruct a direct conveyancing operation, but people are becoming much more used to buying services directly from home using the phone. They don't want to take half a day off to see a solicitor."

Kevin Doolan, banking and

finance partner at Eversheds, Britain's biggest national law firm, Eversheds has co-operated with Hamro Countrywide in its Cardiff call-centre, opened last month, and a Manchester centre is due to open in April. Other national firms, Hammonds Suddards, Dibb Lupton Alsop and Addleshaw Booth & Co are said to be keen to move into domestic conveyancing.

Mr Doolan also anticipates a future of exponential growth, with the 100 or so staff currently employed in Cardiff and Manchester doubling in numbers every nine months. "It's an incredible rate of growth, but the demand is definitely out there," he says. "All we are doing is mimicking things our lender clients have already done."

Doolan estimates that the conveyancing call-centres probably control around 5 per cent of a market worth anything up to £500m. In two years' time, he predicts this figure will reach 25 per cent, and as much as 40 per cent in five years.

"Before Direct Line there were insurance brokers on every High Street. Where are they now? The only way small solicitors' firms are going to be able to compete is by getting together and forming groups. There is no reason why a group of small firms could not do exactly what we're doing," he says.

Nick Hilborne is news editor of 'Solicitors Journal'.

APPOINTMENTS: LEGAL

EASTER OPENINGS

MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE

To £35,000
The well-known medium-sized City firm has a thriving medical negligence practice that will give a 2-3 years qualified specialist every opportunity to build a reputation for working on some of the highest profile and most challenging cases in the field. A good opening for the right person. Ref: D47885

PROPERTY

To £70,000
Enjoy the limelight at one of London's most high-profile law firms as a senior property assistant with 2-5 years' exp. With a strong media clientele, there will be some interesting and varied work, and as you will be working in the firm's most profitable department, the prospects for partnership are excellent. Ref: D29225

TAX

To £38,000
If, as a 0-2 years qualified corporate tax lawyer, you want to develop both your practical experience of major City deals and your academic study of the subject, look no further. This highly profitable medium-sized practice will encourage you to do both. The work will be a mix of transactional and advisory. Ref: D48118

PENSIONS/BENEFITS

To £40,000
This reason the leading City firm has a workload and reputation that many larger practices envy is because of the way it treats its lawyers, giving them all they need to become top-notch advisers. If you have 1-3 years' exp in pension/employee benefits work, this move will set you up for the rest of your career. Ref: D22288

INSOLVENCY

To £50,000
You might as well start at the top, and the London office of this major national firm is just that for non-contentious insolvency work. The clients, the experience and the salaries are unbeatable in the field, whether you have 0-1 or 2-3 years' exp. You could be a company/commercial lawyer looking to switch. Ref: D29089

CAPITAL MARKETS

To £70,000
Promotion that will soon see you appointed a vice-president, as well as a salary that is great even without the huge bonus - it's a good life in-house at one of the world's leading finance houses. It needs corporate or banking lawyers at all levels for a broad capital markets role that also takes in corporate finance. Ref: D36019

LITIGATION

To £40,000
If you can handle a big and varied caseload, and work closely with clients, then you will have a very bright future at this expanding City firm, which has just completed a very good merger. A litigator with 3-7 years' exp will have a 50/50 legal expenses insurers/general commercial split in their work. Ref: D47881

IT/ITP

To £75,000
This top 10 City firm offers an exciting cocktail of high quality work and prospects to ambitious IT/ITP lawyers with 2-5 years' exp. If that was not enough, you will have a name on your CV that will look good whatever you do, and a training and development programme that will help you become a real expert. Ref: D17532

CORPORATE/COMMERCIAL

To £58,000
A US firm without the usual billing pressures - that's the offer from the London office of this US firm, which needs a corporate/commercial lawyer with 1-4 years' exp and marketing skills to advise on a broad spread of work, much of it in media, such as film contracts. Ref: D17532

SHIPPING LITIGATION

To £50,000
You could be a stellar career in shipping litigation after a tour of duty at this leading niche firm in the City, but do not worry - there are no icebergs to fear. It will be full steam ahead for a shipping litigator with 2-3 years' exp who can show clients both enthusiasm and a common-sense approach. Ref: D5588

LITIGATION

To £40,000
What makes this West End firm especially attractive is its market-leading media practice and a training programme that will ensure you are ready to handle a challenging and varied commercial litigation caseload. As well as 1-2 years' exp, you need the personality to stand on your own two feet with clients. Ref: D41348

PROJECT FINANCE

To £Equity
After an initial spell in this top City firm's London office, you will relocate to Hong Kong to play a key role in a project finance practice which is the envy of many larger firms. An extremely lucrative equity partnership is the reward for a senior lawyer who can show excellent practice development and language skills. Ref: D27180

For further information, in complete confidence, please contact Alison Jacobs, Gavin Sharpe or Tim Marshall (all qualified lawyers) on 0171-406 8082 (0171-731 5289 or 0171-734 8183 evenings/weekends) or write to them at QD Legal, Confidential fax: 0171-831 8394.

QD Legal
37-41 Bedford Row
London
WC1R 4JH

London
Birmingham
Leeds
Manchester
Hong Kong
Paris

New York
Sydney
Melbourne
Auckland
Toronto
Vancouver

QD

